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AUGUST 1992

WIZARD

No. 12

THE GUIDE TO COMICS

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WIZARD

Volume 1
Number 12
August 1992

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COVER BLAST

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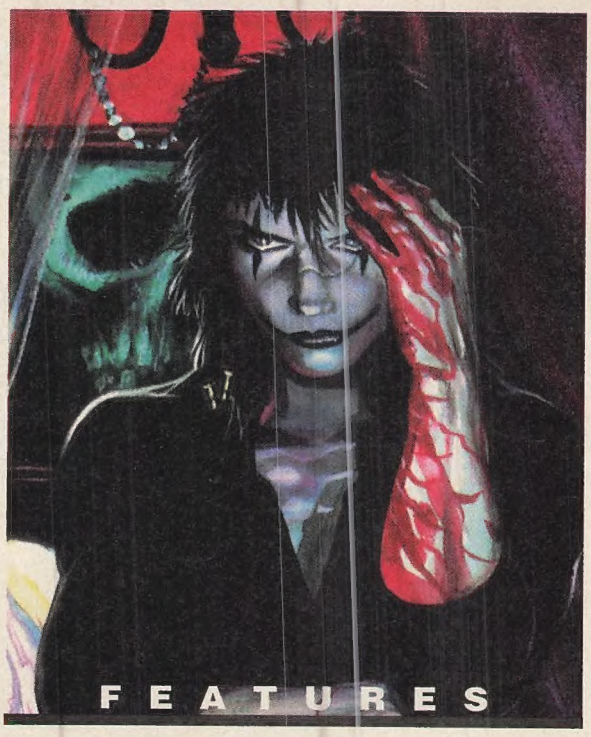

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DEATH'S HEAD ™ & © 1992 Marvel Entertainemnt Group

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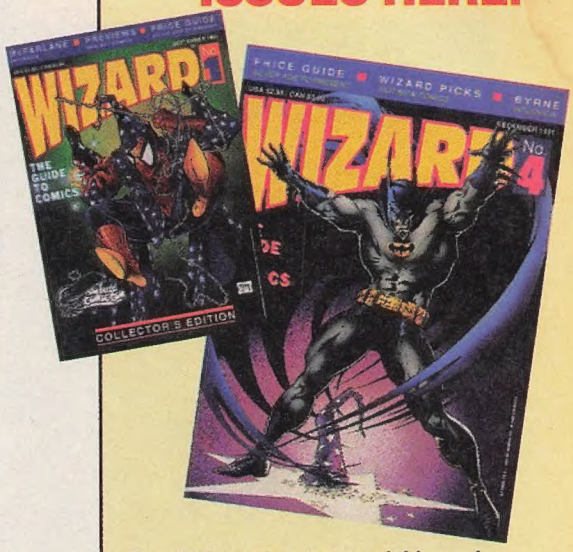

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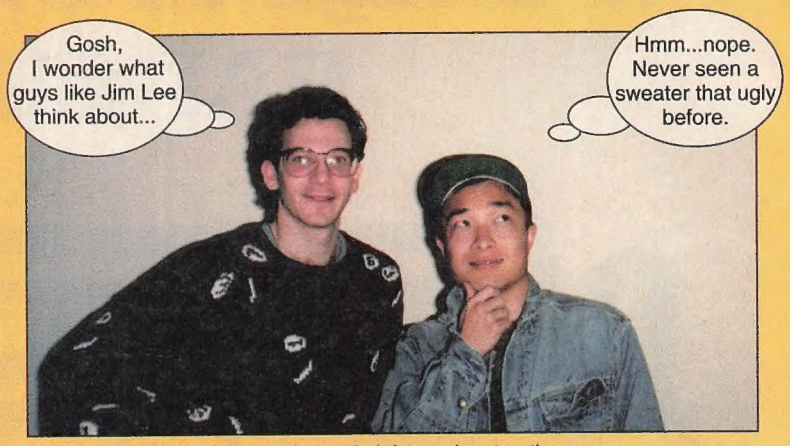
A Letter From Our Publisher



Gareb and Jim get together to discuss their future plans together.

Hello from the mighty Wizard HQ! I must say, how much mail can one place get? Your responses have been tremendous, so just keep it coming. We enjoy it all.

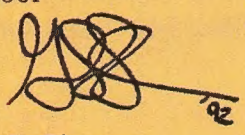
I look forward to meeting a lot of you at this year's Chicago Comic-Con. Boy, we're going to have lots of fun giving away lots of autographed "goodies."

I have some good news and some bad news, bad news first. The Wolverine card was not available at press time so we apologize if this causes any inconvenience. But for issue #13 (here's the good news), can you say Psylocke by Joe "The Master Painter" Jusko? That's right—a Skybox Masterpiece card. Now, I didn't see the card yet, but I was told she's a winner.

Now our Special Edition—talk about special, one-of-a-kind, never been seen or done before cover by all the Image guys: Todd McFarlane, Jim Lee, Rob Liefeld, Marc Silvestri, Jim Valentino, Whilce Portacio and Erik Larsen! This triple gatefold piece (4 panels long) will be a real mind-blower. Top it all off with a full feature on the comic book great himself, Stan Lee.

I'll have you know-it's really official now-I don't sleep anymore.

Stay cool



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A Letter From Our Editor

One of the newest and most high-tech ways to keep up with the comic-book industry today is through computer bulletin boards. Bulletin board systems (or BBS) are networks of computer users from all over the country (and the world) who share a common interest—in this case, comics. I belong to two of the biggest comics BBS going—the Comics and Animation Forum on CompuServe Information Service and the comics section of the Science Fiction Round Table on GEnie, which is operated by General Electric.

As you might expect, the membership of these BBS tends to be a little older, perhaps even a little more literate, than your average comics fan. After all, you have to own a computer and be able to pay the phone bill to manage this kind of fan activity.

That said, the GEnie SFRT has recently given us all an opportunity to see how such an older, more discriminating crowd differs from the run-of-the-pack comics shop denizen, by instituting the Thunderbolt Awards for excellence in comics in 1991. The members nominated in several categories, and the final ballot was just released:

Best Writer: Peter David; Neil Gaiman; William Messner-Loebs; Alan Moore; Art Spiegelman
Best Penciller: Eduardo Barreto; Brian Bolland; Norm Breyfogle; Alan Davis; Dan Jurgens; Frank Miller
Best Inker: Brian Bolland; Willie Blyberg; Mark Farmer; Jamie Hernandez; Dennis Janke; Wendy Pini; Roy Richardson; Ty Templeton; Scott Williams
Best Colorist: Brian Bolland; Lovern Kindzierski; Julia Lacquement; Tom McCaw; Steve Oliff; Daniel Vozzo
Best Letterer: Janice Chiang; John Costanza; Albert De Guzman; Todd Klein; Tom Orzechowski
Best Continuing Series: *Excalibur; From Hell; Hawkworld; Incredible Hulk; Justice League America; Sandman; Suicide Squad*
Best Limited Series: *Black Canary: New Wings; Books of Magic; Captain Confederacy; Concrete: Fragile Creatures; Green Lantern: Emerald Dawn II; Infinity Gauntlet; Robin II*
Best New Series: *Aquaman; Black Hood; Deathstroke, The Terminator; Magnus, Robot Fighter;* "Sin City" (in *Dark Horse Presents*)
Most Improved Series: *Dr. Fate; Excalibur; Incredible Hulk; L.E.G.I.O.N. '91; X-Factor*
Best Graphic Novel: *A Small Killing* (so far released only in a British version); *Batman: Holy Terror; Batman: Full Circle; Batman: Master of the Future; Epicurus the Sage II*
Best Character: Blue Beetle; Death; Dream; Hulk; John Constantine; Superman
Best Team of Characters: Doom Patrol; Excalibur; Justice League America; Legion of Super-Heroes; Suicide Squad; X-Factor
Best Reprint Volume/Collection: *From Hell #1; Legion of Super-Heroes Archives vol. 1; Maus II; Sandman: Preludes and Nocturnes; Sandman: Dream Country*
Best Issue: *Action Comics Annual* #3 (*Armageddon: 2001*—Superman becomes President); *Detective Comics Annual* #4 (*Armageddon: 2001*—the final battle between Batman and Ra's Al Ghul in a probable future); *Green Arrow Annual* #4 (50th Anniversary, featuring Ollie and Dinah in a Robin Hood "dream story"); *Hellblazer* #41 (Constantine diagnosed with lung cancer); *Incredible Hulk* #388 (Jim Wilson has AIDS); *Fantastic Four* #352 (Reed vs. Dr. Doom in a series of time warps); *Flash* #53 (team-up with Superman); *Sandman* #31 ("Three Septembers and a January"); *Superman* #59 (Superman and Lois have a long conversation); *Superman* #64 (Superman answers his mail at Christmas)
Best Arc/Plotline: "Breakdowns" (*Justice League America* #53-60, *Justice League Europe* #29-36); "Cosmos in Collision" (*Quasar*); "Dangerous Habits" (*Hellblazer* #41-46); "Season of Mists" (*Sandman* #22-28); "Shadow Box" (*Batman* #467-469)

Notice anything interesting and surprising in that list? How about the near total absence of "hot" titles, creators and characters? No X-Men of any kind; no Lee, no Liefeld, no McFarlane; no Wolverine, no Cable, no Lobo.

If you find yourself unfamiliar with any or all of the people or comics listed above, maybe you owe yourself the chance to investigate them.

Next month, I should have the final winners in the first GEnie Thunderbolt Awards.

-Patrick Daniel O'Neill

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Jim Lee

A Bowl of Granola

WIZARD: We already know all about how you and your fellow creators formed Image, so let's skip over all that. The parting of ways between you and Marvel--was it smooth or was it acrimonious?

LEE: Definitely smooth. There were no problems. My editor and I felt that we always got along extremely well for the two or three years that we worked together, and I gave him four month's notice that I would be leaving and so he had four issues during which to find a replacement art-and-writing team.

WIZARD: Do you think that if they loosen up on their creative freedom with character ownership that the door would be open for you to go back to work for them?

LEE: Absolutely.

By Rob Samsel

Photo: Al Ortega

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WIZARD: What do you think about the guys that stay with the bigger companies that are constantly creating characters? Do you think that they are being taken for a ride?
LEE: Some people don't mind what they're doing, others may not mind now, but maybe later down the road they may. There's no absolute value judgment system. Each person decides whether this is the kind of working relationship they want to be in. Some people want the support system in which to create characters without having to worry about the publishing aspects of the business--overhead and shipping costs and other stuff. They would rather just sit around and create things and let Marvel take it from there.
WIZARD: Do you think that what you guys are doing is the kick-in-the-butt that this industry needs for more fair treatment of people in the business as a whole?
LEE: I think that if we're successful we will change the way business is done. I've said this from the start. I think if we're a viable company and we survive, I don't see why we wouldn't serve as a very attractive alternative to working for Marvel and DC. Whether it's work-for-hire or creating characters on your own--if you work for Image we're going to try to make it the best working environment that we can and I think that will have repercussions.
WIZARD: I think that you'll see fewer guys leaving the industry to work in advertising, such as doing videogame covers for the different videogame companies. What do you think?
LEE: That's a different thing altogether. Some people are only doing comics because the advertising work has dried up. And some people honestly make more money in advertising than they do in comics--although there certainly are some people in comics who make more than in advertising.
WIZARD: I know what you mean. I have a couple of friends that left the industry because they weren't making enough as far as royalties go and they just want to go back to advertising.

When you were with Marvel did you want to stay on the X-Men or was it a case of it's just time to leave and that kind of deal?
LEE: Although I had only been on the new title for 11 issues or so, my first work on the *X-Men* was issue #248. I started my regular run with #267, so I think I did roughly 20 or 30 issues of *X-Men.* There is a little burnout in that you're drawing the same characters for so long. The X-Men were my favorite characters when I grew up collecting comics and it was a real kick to work on those characters during my stay with Marvel.
WIZARD: It seems that you built a lot of things in the magazine that seemed to be your own--like inter-character relationships and things like that. Did you leave plans with Bob Harras for the book that you think will be carried out or do you think they will leave them by the wayside?
LEE: I think that every artist and every writer on a book will leave that kind of baggage behind. Editors know your plans for these characters because when you tell them that you want to do something different with a character you have to tell them where it's going to lead to. The X-office knows what I had in mind for Wolverine and Professor X and they're actually following up on that stuff. I wrote pages of what I thought the back history on all this would be and how it would slowly be revealed. So I assume that they will adapt and use that. I have stuff on Gambit and where he came from and a lot more information and background on him than was actually revealed in the Ghost Rider crossover. You know you just can't reveal this all at once, so it's a slow process. I assume that they'll continue with some of the concepts we started: the Rogue-Gambit relationship, some of the things we were hinting at between Psylocke and Cyclops, and future plans with Magneto. All that stuff will eventually show up again. Like Omega Red--I had always planned for him to come back; Sebastian Shaw--another character who would eventually come back in some way; and the White Queen--so I think that eventually this will all happen. I just won't be doing it.
WIZARD: One thing I think all the readers would like to know and you don't have to tell us if you don't want to - which of the X-Men is going to betray the team? Did you and the editor decide?
LEE: We did--but I wouldn't want to ruin it.
WIZARD: I don't blame you one bit.
LEE: Although we had a pretty elaborate storyline and I think it would have been a hoot to work on--but that's not going to be the case.
WIZARD: Going back to the Image deal--is there anything that you guys think that you would have done differently or has everything pretty much been proceeding smoothly and according to plan?
LEE: We have a general idea of what we're going to do, and we're playing a lot of it by ear as well, and we'll continue to do that, to keep ourselves flexible and in tune with the reception of the books. We're jostling around with the schedule and the next books on line to be revealed and things like that. We're just starting out, so right now there aren't any regrets about anything that we've done so far.
WIZARD: It seems as though a lot of the books you've worked on have been team books. Has that been a conscious decision on your part, or has it just worked out that way?
LEE: It wasn't really a conscious decision on my part. I worked on the X-Men because they were my favorite characters, the Punisher is the only character that I've done that was a single character, and actually it was a good time in my career to do a single character, right off of *Alpha Flight,* because it allowed me to concentrate more on my actual drawing and lighting and things like that. You're drawing fewer characters, so it allows you to concentrate more on actual anatomy. As opposed to

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drawing the X-Men, where you're just drawing things everywhere and hundreds of characters, aliens, spaceships and all that stuff--it was a different kind of challenge. But, I really like all the interaction that you get on group books and also the variety of characters you get to draw in each issue, so you don't get tired of just drawing one character.
WIZARD: We've seen a preliminary sketch of a character of yours called Deathblow, tells as much as you can about him.
LEE: I'm probably not going to say too much about him at this point, we have a concept and origin behind him but we're sort of keeping it under wraps for now, until we get closer to the actual release date.
WIZARD: Will Deathblow be a one-shot, mini, or a full series?
LEE: It's going to be one of the chapters in a book called *Darker Image*, which is an anthology book that I think will be coming out in either October or November, Sam Kieth will be doing a character of his own, Rob Liefeld will also be doing a character of his own, and my chapter will be dealing with this character, Deathblow. I'll basically be doing a mini-series with Deathblow in *Darker Image,* and then I'll come right back with *WildC.A.T.s,* the regular series.
WIZARD: Are you going to be interacting Deathblow with *WildC.A.T.s* in these series, or will they totally stand on their own?
LEE: Within the anthology series, Deathblow will be completely on his own.
WIZARD: I've heard some news about you doing some work with Valiant. Is there anything you can tell us as far as anything concrete goes?
LEE: The only thing I've done for them is a pencilled cover for a new book called *Hard C.O.R.P.S Psi-borgs.* I pencilled it off of Bob Layton's cover layout and then he inked it. I think he did a terrific job on it and it looks real nice.
WIZARD: Anything else on tap with the Valiant boys?
LEE: That was it for now.
WIZARD: Let's talk a little about the artwork itself. When you do your layouts, do you start them off real tight, or do you do basic roughs first? Basically what I'm asking is, how do your pages evolve?
LEE: I start with really loose gesture drawings with regular lead pencil on the actual board itself, kinda roughing in the borders, roughing out the figures, then blocking out the shapes and the composition. Then I come back in with a blue pencil and rule in the border lines, basically find one line where I indicated a bunch of lines for a gesture, doing these very simple line contour drawings of the characters and of the backgrounds. Then I erase the page, and because the blue pencil is very difficult to erase it remains there on the page. All the regular lead pencil is erased. I use the blue pencil as a sort of a guide, a blueprint to draw over again with regular lead pencil. It works really well, because if I draw a head and I don't think it looks right or in perspective or if it's too big or small for the figure I just erase it and I still have the underpinnings of the structure to work off of, so you never really run out of space in the panel and you never have to worry about your figure bleeding off the panel in a manner you didn't foresee. It gives you the freedom to get a lot of motion and dynamics into your initial drawing and then fine tune it to get your final drawing, without having to blow it up or lightbox it from another rough.
WIZARD: When you start to work for the day, do you go straight to the page itself, or do you warm up by doodling?
LEE: I pretty much warm up right on the page, starting off sluggishly, then later in the day, or at night, depending on how long my work day is, everything comes along pretty effortlessly.
WIZARD: How many pages do you pump out in a day?
LEE: I'd say about a page to a page-and-a-half a day, full pencils. When I do just layouts as I've been doing for the past couple of [*X-Men*] issues, I'll do two to four pages a day, because there's no rendering or blacks to fill in or anything like that.
WIZARD: How long did it take to do the 100 card X-Men set?
LEE: That took me a couple of months. I was doing those in my spare time while I was working on the *X-Men*. It took me a lot longer than I thought it would. It actually took me between an hour to four hours to do each card. Towards the end, boy, I was really feeling it. It's like you're running a long marathon. At first, you're really excited, the first few cards go along zip, zip, zip, an hour here , an hour there, then towards the end they were taking several hours to finish.
WIZARD: You hit the wall.
LEE: Yeah, you definitely do hit it, but looking back I'm glad I did it, and I'm really proud of the final product. Paul Mounts did a terrific job of coloring them, and Impel and Marvel did a great production job with the cards and they look really nice.
WIZARD: Any pieces of artwork that you've done that on a personal level have really knocked your socks off?
LEE: There are panels here and there in certain comics that I've done that I think worked real well or were new poses or lighting schemes, things that were roadmarkers I guess, that indicated that I was getting better as an artist. Things that I couldn't pull off before, that I could do now. It's more of a personal thing. I find that the readers seem to react differently to my art than I do. They tend to invariably pick out Psylocke or Wolverine and say "I really like that shot!" To me, it could have just been the kind of standard pose that I could do in my sleep. They tend to ignore some of the other stuff where I'm trying to do something different, that might not even involve a superhero, and I don't think they pick up on that.
WIZARD: Basically the nuts-and-bolts stuff.
LEE: Exactly, I really think anyone could do a nice pin-up shot of Wolverine the readers would react to. I do that too, but I also try to do other things that help me develop as an artist and get better and generally those things are the smaller panels, or the quiet stuff rather than the big action stuff.
WIZARD: Storytelling seems to be a constant evolution.
LEE: That's the one thing I've always tried to work on, my storytelling. I spent more time with it on [*X-Men*] issue #4

Well, I make no bones X-Men/ WILDC.A.T.s crossover,

than ever before, and I really like the results of it. Lately, because of the rushed deadlines, it's become less of a priority, but I hope to make it more important for me in my future work on *WildC.A.T.s* and Deathblow. I want to spend more time on the storytelling and less on the actual drawing. I feel it's always been one of my weaker points.
WIZARD: Anyone else's work out there lately that's really been impressing you?
LEE: I've had a first glance at the *Spawn* stuff and it looks really terrific. I haven't seen Todd's stuff in a long time and his storytelling really blows me away! It's just really nice stuff!
WIZARD: He's got that graphic design background that he really uses to his advantage.
LEE: Right, exactly. Whilce [Portacio] and Marc [Silvestri] have been doing some really nice concept sketches for their respective series. There's a lot of other stuff out there I follow, Frank Miller's "Sin City" was just incredibly graphic and interesting to look at. The stuff that Matt Wagner was doing on *Batman*. It's kind of funny, my own personal tastes tend to run towards contrasting, graphic looks. Kevin Nowlan, Mike Mignola, the stark graphic look to me is really exciting.
WIZARD: A guy whose graphic style comes to mind to me is Joe Quesada.
LEE: He's got a nice blend of like a Nowlan/Mignola/Arthur Adams look, a really nice look. He'll definitely go places.
WIZARD: Before you even got into the business you must have had influences. I personally see a lot of *Avengers*-era George Perez in your stuff. Who were the guys who you were drawn to back then?
LEE: Exactly the stuff you were talking about there, the George Perez *Avengers* stuff. I still remember it real fondly, my penchant for noodling to great detail on, like, bricks all comes from him. I was always blown away by his attention to detail. I think John Byrne's work was always very dynamic, real slick, just real pretty. There's a real consistency that kind of blended a psuedo-realistic Neal Adams style with more of an animation look. Frank Miller, when he was working on *Daredevil,* a real graphic lighting, incredible storytelling. Later on, I got more into Barry-Windsor-Smith's stuff, real visceral, amazing drawing. Kevin Nowlan's work, I thought man, his women were the most sensuous, gorgeous women I've ever seen in comics. Mike Mignola for his composition, his spotting of blacks, some of the abstractions he was doing for legs, lips and eyes. There isn't an artist out there that I haven't gotten something from as far as like, "Hey, that's neat how they're doing this" or, "That's a novel way of doing a fadeout or a shadowing effect" or something like that. Almost everyone out there I've kind of learned something from.
WIZARD: Now that we've touched on the artists, any of the writers out there that you might like to work with in the future?
LEE: I've certainly thought about doing something in the future with Chris Claremont. I'd do anything to work with Frank Miller, Neil Gaiman, or some of the other tremendous writing talents out there. I really don't know a lot of people in the industry firsthand yet. I suppose if I was introduced to some of my favorite writers in the business, I would probably hit them up to do something.
WIZARD: Back to the broad scope of Image, are there any characters out there in comics that you'd like to bring in to interact with *WildC.A.T.s*?
LEE: Funny you should ask, in the third part of the mini-series, we're going to have Youngblood. But you're talking about outside of Image?
WIZARD: Yeah.
LEE: The comic is such that I can really see them interacting with any group of characters out there. Is that sort of a backhanded way of asking if there are going to be any cross-overs with other companies?
WIZARD: Not really, it's sort of a backhanded way of asking you what characters are your favorites, figuring you might like to someday work on them within the parameters of the Image universe.
LEE: Well, I make no bones about wanting to do an X-Men/WildC.A.T.s cross-over, I think that would be a lot of fun. Honestly, besides X-Men, there really aren't any characters out there that I feel I have to draw. Unlike a lot of people in the industry I really only had two favorites, and one was X-Men, the other being Daredevil. Daredevil, because of the way Frank was handling him, but I don't really have a desire to draw that character. I liked that character when he was working on it. Batman, I think I'd like to take a stab at, because he's like the preeminent character to take your stab at artistically, to see what you can contribute, as a chance to strut your stuff on a character that so many other people have been able to do a wide variety of things with and have that character work. I think that would be artistically challenging.
WIZARD: Out of all the individual X-Men, which one is your favorite. Do you even have a favorite?
LEE: Not really, I mean it kinda varies. I like each of the characters for different reasons. Wolverine, if you feel like drawing that savage, kind of Conan the Barbarian-type. Jubilee's a fun little character that's more animated, more cartoony. Beast is this big, hunkering kind of muscle-bound character. Gambit is a very dynamic acrobatic character. I think they all have different things that I like about them, so I really couldn't single out just one as my

about doing an
it would be a lot of fun.

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favorite.
WIZARD: Out of all the WildC.A.T.s, knowing what you done with them so far, which one do you think the kids will really hit it off with, as individual characters?
LEE: For me, I like Emp, I mean I can sympathize with a short character like that. I think Maul will be real popular. I think kids like the real extreme characters, the ones that are either really large or small. I think Zealot may replace Psylocke as a possible fan favorite.
WIZARD: In that particular genre that we're speaking of.
LEE: Right! (laughter) Who knows, the Grifter, a lot of people I've talked to have initially picked him out saying "Ooh he's mysterious, he's the only character whose face is hidden, tell me more about him." I don't think it's just a look, I think it's more of a combination of a look and their personalities, the way you animate them on the page, the things you have them do. You have a character do something that's cool, or life-threatening, or life-saving and the readers seem to get something out of that. The kids read comics to enter a fantasy world that you're creating, and within that world you can make any character look great or awful. That's the trick, making these characters believable within in the context of the universe that you've created, and strike a cord with the reader.
WIZARD: Do you have any personal interests outside of the comics world, any hobbies or anything like that?
LEE: Unfortunately, I've been so busy--I was just talking about this to someone the other day--comics have become such a passion for me. There's a tremendous demand on my time and energy. I used to have a lot more hobbies.(laughs) I pretty much spend time with my wife, I read every now and then, when I have a chance to. I spend so much time working I don't have time for a lot of that other stuff. I think that somewhere soon, something's gonna have to give, so I can return to having more of a normal life. Things have been going so fast, it's been such a rollercoaster ride since I broke into comics five years ago that I haven't really had time to catch my breath and figure out what I've done and what it is exactly that I'm doing. There's been a tremendous amount of momentum here.
WIZARD: Sort of like a small snowball that hasn't reached the bottom of the hill yet.
LEE: Right, you're kind of just along for the ride. So it's been dizzying and exhilarating at the same time.
WIZARD: Have you been to see any good movies lately?
LEE: Well I don't know if you could call that a hobby. I see probably a movie a week, and I rent a lot of movies. I can apply doing that to get something out of it for comics as well.
WIZARD: So you can write them off, your video rentals and movies, technically?
LEE: Yeah! (laughter)
WIZARD: What have been some of your favorites lately?
LEE: Recently I just watched the entire *Star Trek* series again, I bought them as a collection. I've been watching one or two of them a night, while I was working. I think you can really see how important the writing is, and the production values in pulling off a successful movie like that. [*Star Trek*] One, Two and Four were the best for me, I thought Five was pretty putrid. (laughter) I'll go out and get all of the *Godfather* movies, basically the ones I'll just go watch over and over again.
WIZARD: Do you watch any TV at all?
LEE: Not really. I find that it's hard to schedule regular things in my life, given the demands on my deadlines, so to be a really avid TV watcher you have to set aside, say, 8 o'clock, Monday night to watch your favorite show each week. I just don't have time to do that on a regular basis.
WIZARD: It's really no fun being programmed like that anyway.
LEE: Right, I mean I could program my VCR, but that would indicate that I really cared about what these TV shows were doing for me. It's hard for me to invest any of my time into something like that.
WIZARD: Do you have any favorite breakfast cereals?
LEE: (laughter) Actually I wake up so late in the day I hardly ever have time for breakfast.
WIZARD: No Lucky Charms?
LEE: (laughter again) That stuff will kill you man, it's just all sugar! I mean I'm not all that health conscious, although I do eat some health foods. It's just that I don't wake up early enough for breakfast. I'm the kind kind of guy who would just rather get up and eat cold pizza and drink Coke.
WIZARD: I'm like that too.
LEE: The thing is, when I was much younger we used to eat pretty much Korean food all the time, I'm Korean, and you eat rice and the same foods for breakfast that you would eat for lunch and dinner, pretty much. You don't have special "breakfast foods" I was never raised that way where every day I would wake up and say "Hey, it's breakfast, I have to have cereal or eggs."
WIZARD: I know, I left that regimen in college.
LEE: (laughs) Yeah, I don't think I ever woke up early enough to eat breakfast in college, either.
WIZARD: What does the future hold for you, what do you hopefully see going on for yourself?
LEE: I think about that a lot these days, I've got a kid on the

That's the trick, making these the universe that you've created,

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way, in July.
WIZARD: Congratulations.
LEE: Thanks. I really have no idea yet how that's going to change my life. I know it will, so there will be changes in my work schedule.
WIZARD: We saw how that happened to Todd.
LEE: Yeah. You know it's hard to say. I've got a bunch of different things that could actually happen. Sometimes I get an urge to run off to a Third World country and work in the Peace Corps or something like that. I have a desire to go back to school and get a Masters in history, just for the hell of it. You know, you get those kinds of urges, so it's hard for me to say exactly what's ahead. We've made some interesting contacts in Hollywood, who knows what that might lead to? Right now I'm very content, we're just basically working on the next level of our careers, working on the characters we own. We're trying to get a whole new company of characters off the ground and that's a tremendous challenge. We're learning a great deal as we go along. I'm not doing the same thing I was doing at Marvel, this is taking a lot more time and energy and it's challenging as a hell and I can see it taking up many years.
WIZARD: Anything that you can add about the growing sentiment of anti-Image people? It seems like there's a lot of people out there that want to give you guys the negative bum rush and I don't know if that's warranted or not.
LEE: It's one of those things where everyone has an opinion. What gets me is that we get a lot of letters in the CBG, all these people going on that Image sucks, that it won't last, that it won't be around next year. I guess they feel they just have to get it off their chest, to predict doom for us. There are people who just like to predict doom for everybody. They predict doom for Marvel saying "I can't believe they raised the prices, they're not going to get very far with that kind of policy, and this and that." If it makes them all feel better, fine.
WIZARD: Do you think it's just a lot of jealousy?
LEE: I won't lie to you, I think there's a real resentment out there as far as some of the older fan community is involved. I'm not going sling mud, that's really not my attitude. I don't think they like what Image is, I don't think they like what Image represents to the marketplace. I think they're trying to protect their little fiefdom of comics as they once knew it to be, and want it to continue to be. I think that there are forces around them, not just us, a lot more powerful forces that are a going to rapidly change this industry, this business, this artform, and we're really just a small part of it.
WIZARD: I think what you guys are doing is great. I've felt for a long time that somebody needed to step up to this industry and give it a good kick in chops.
LEE: We're changing a lot. I say that word a lot, don't I?
WIZARD: Wait until July, you'll be saying it even more, once you have the child. (laughter)
LEE: What we're doing is changing some of the preconceptions that people have about comics, about what it takes to have a successful comic. People used to think "You know you can't sell that many comics, working for an independent company" and we've completely thrown that notion out the window. I think *Youngblood,* after it's second printing, will break a million, Todd's already broken a million after pre-orders. These things would have just been unbelievable figures a year ago. Now this will become more commonplace, more accepted. It gives an alternative to guys who are just starting in the business that they don't neccessarily have to go to the Big Two to start their careers, or guys who are there now don't have to stay there forever. If they ever decide that they want to leave, or that they're unhappy with the situation, there is a strong alternative out there for them to voice their creative desires. We're also giving an alternative to the retailers, that they don't have to sell just one kind of comic book, they're not dependent on just one company for their livelihood. I think it's a really exciting time to be in comic books. I think it's really important for the freelance community to realize that one can make a very good living and own and control your own characters in comics. I think it would be really awful if the only place you could work was at the Big Two. I'm not saying that you shouldn't, but if that was your only alternative, that would be a real shame.
WIZARD: Anything you like to say to any of your fans out there, or even some of your friends? Or some people who aren't your friends?
LEE: (laughs) Sure, sure. When all these people write in and belittle Image or talk about how we are going to ultimately fail, and how we can't write, and how we have these egos, and we're very arrogant and all this other stuff, I just think these people are reading into a lot of this. They don't know us, they've never met us. One thing that does make me feel good, or calms me down is the fact that there are a lot of people who like my work, who honestly like my artwork, some who like my plotting or writing or whatever, like what I do with characters. And ultimately those are the only people who matter. It's nice when you meet these people in person, because all that speculation and other business crud just goes by the wayside. You can talk to them about the characters and about what they get out of the comic book, and about the future of the characters, just all the imaginary stuff, which is a lot more fun and creative.
WIZARD: Let's hope this conversation will show those people out there that there's more to Jim Lee than just an artist and a writer.
LEE: (laughs) Yeah, I guess. I think that even through interviews that it's really difficult to do that. I mean, a lot of people will just sum you up after reading just one interview, or two interviews. It's hard enough just to get to know the people you meet and hang out with all the time.
WIZARD: That's why I wanted to know your favorite breakfast cereal!
LEE: There you go!
WIZARD: I was hoping you would say Cap'n Crunch with Crunch Berries or something like that.
LEE: If I eat a breakfast cereal at all it would be granola, that sort of sums up my character, my essence right there. (laughter)
WIZARD: Jim Lee--A bowl of granola. (more laughter).

characters believable within the context of and strike a cord with the reader.

THE CREATOR'S EDGE

TUNDRA

BY TOM PALMER, JR.

With most comics companies today taking advantage of their creators and their ideas, Kevin Eastman's Tundra Publishing Limited stands out as one of the foremost advocates of creator's rights. Tundra displays this support by giving its artists full control over their projects, from initial budget to the final printed project.

Tundra was founded in July of 1990 by Kevin Eastman, who, along with Peter Laird, created the immensely popular Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. Despite the huge success of the Turtles, Eastman is able to identify with the struggles some creators have in arranging to get their work published. He and Laird self-published the original adventures of the Turtles, which forced them to finance the comic themselves, but allowed them complete control over what happened to their creators. With Tundra, Eastman hopes to eliminate the financial difficulties experienced by comic-book creators, while still keeping what Tundra calls "the creator's edge."

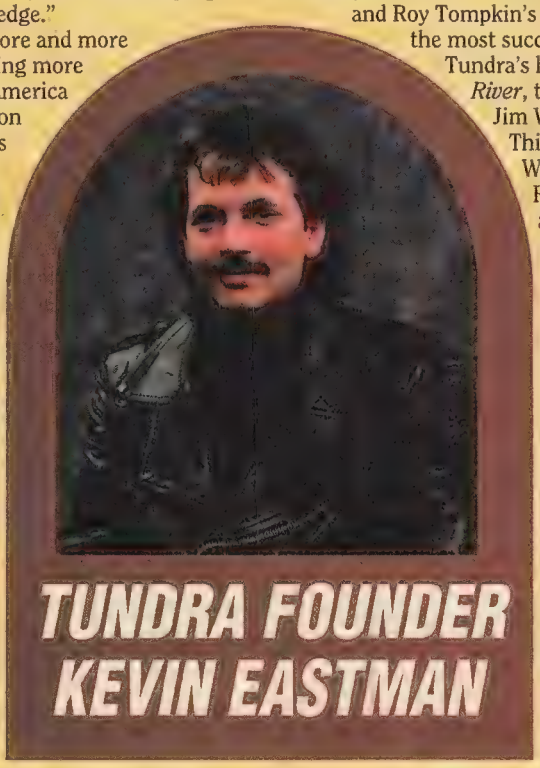
As comic books are coming more and more into public view, they are becoming more widely accepted by mainstream America as a legitimate means of expression and entertainment. Tundra hopes to continue this acceptance by publishing material from a large and diverse group of creators ranging from comic-book legends Michael Kaluta, Bernie Wrightson, and the late Vaughn Bode, to the stars of today, such as Alan Moore, Neil Gaiman, Dave McKean, Rick Veitch, and Steve Bissette, and newer names such as James O'Barr, Michael D. Allred, Mark Bode, Bernie Mireault, and Al Columbia.

By gathering together such a large group of differing artists and writers, Tundra is able to publish a wide range of titles, each furthering a certain aspect or genre of the comic-book field. These titles cover just about every category, from humor comics and horror anthologies, to quirky superheroes and down-to-earth personal stories.

When considering the diversity of talent and the vast amount of control given to the creators, a logical question to be asked is, "How can these books be published regularly?" Tundra has solved this problem by not allowing a series to be published until three issues are completed and ready to be printed. However, this rule is stretched when applied to more personal and creator-driven series such as Dave McKean's *Cages* or *Rain* by Rolf Stark, where the amount of time and energy poured into each page does not lend itself to a regimented schedule.

With this guideline firmly in place, Tundra has lined up some high-quality series and material for the foreseeable future. They have already published a small, yet strong core of humor titles, with more comics on the way. Issues of Wanyo's *Beer Nutz*, Mark Martin's *20 Nude Dancers 20*, and Roy Tompkin's *Trailer Trash* have appeared, but the most successful and eye-catching of Tundra's humor titles is *Frank in The River*, the introduction to Martin and Jim Woodring's *Tantalizing Stories*. This full-color comic featured Woodring's bizarre creation, Frank, in a surreal pantomime adventure, as well as a short story featuring Montgomery Wart by Martin. The painted artwork on both of these stories showcased some of the most brilliant and lush color artwork in comics. Unfortunately, when *Tantalizing Stories* begins in October as a bi-monthly, it will run as a black-and-white comic, but it promises to make up for the loss of color in laughs and entertainment.

Also upcoming on the humorous side is *Hyena*, a black-and-white humor anthology edited by Mark Martin that will try to fill the gap left by the poor quality of mainstream humor mags and



TUNDRA FOUNDER KEVIN EASTMAN

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the much lamented demise of *Weirdo*. According to Tundra's director of promotions, ann Eagan, the first two issues of *Hyena* will have full-color one-page "supplements" for the Lillian Spencer Drake Mail-Order Catalog, the "Whole Earth for the Mentally Deranged." The catalog will feature such bargains as "The Home Lard Kit," and a take-off on Robert Crumb's blues trading cards called "Zeroes of the Blues."

Tundra also has a strong place in the horror market, with the publication of *Taboo*. Spiderbaby Graffix's popular and critically acclaimed series. With Tundra's help, Steve Bissette, founder of Spiderbaby, is now able to bring his black-and-white anthology out on a regular schedule. Along with this steady publishing schedule, *Taboo* is now able to add some extras, such as a color section and special supplements. One of these extras in *Penny Dreadful*, a booklet included with the sixth issue of *Taboo*, which acts as a preview to Neil Gaiman and Michael Zulli's *Sweeny Todd*. This special insert will only be included with pre-ordered copies of *Taboos* or with reorders placed within 30 days of publication. After that, the remaining copies of *Penny Dreadful* will be destroyed and it will not be reprinted.

Aside from being a showcase for the works of Gaiman, Zulli, Rick Grimes, S. Clay Wilson, and Rolf Stark, *Taboo* is also currently the only place where the work of Alan Moore can be seen. Two of his major projects, "Lost Girls" with Melinda Gebbie, and "From Hell," in collaboration with Eddie Campbell, are being serialized in *Taboo*. "Lost Girls" is Moore's examination of erotica, featuring such familiar fictional characters as Wendy from *Peter Pan*, Dorothy from *The Wizard* of Oz, and Alice from *Through the Looking Glass*, and is illustrated with full-color artwork by Gebbie. Moore, along with Campbell, has already produced the first five chapters of "From Hell," his highly researched, fictionalized account of the Jack the Ripper murders. With both of these series, after enough material has seen print, Tundra will publish collected editions. Tundra will also provide assistance to Moore's Mad Love imprint when *Big Numbers* resumes publication with Al Columbia replacing Bill Sienkiewicz as artist of the series. Columbia, who worked for a time as Sienkiewicz's assistant, has also completed *Doghead* for publication by Tundra.

Usually, creator-owned projects are thought of as being as far away from mainstream comics as possible. Surprisingly, Tundra publishes a wide array of superhero comics by a diverse group of creators. However, each of these titles has a peculiar twist that makes them unique. Bernie Mireault's *The Jam*, for instance, features the world's cheapest superhero, who fights crime in a hand-altered jogging suit. Featuring a similarly light-hearted, humorous tone is Michael D. Allred's *Madman*, which Ann Eagan describes as a "sensitive superhero." The title character, "doesn't really know his own identity, but has the ability to have premonitions and read minds or pick up on other people's feelings."

Contrasting these light-hearted series are the titles in Rick Vietch's Heroica, which is co-published by Tundra and King Hell press. *Bratpack*, the first of these grim revisionist superhero tales, will be collected by Tundra in preparation for the second story in the cycle, the *Maximortal*. This graphic novel will begin serialization in a full-color series starting in August.

Tundra will also publish the adventures of a hero who crosses the boundaries of superhero, horror, and adventure comics, Michael Gilbert's *Mr. Monster*. They plan to start in August with a three-issue mini-series containing original material, entitled *Mr. Monster Attacks*. This will be followed by two more mini-series and reprints of Mr. Monster's past adventures.

Captain Sternn, Bernie Wrightson's science-fiction hero, will star in his own five-issue series. Wrightson has completed writing and penciling the series, but wants a different artist to ink and color the comic. Tundra has some big-name possibilities lined-up for the position, but is keeping it a secret until the series is ready to go.

While many of Tundra's titles are geared for older readers or are strictly for adults, there are plans for more material that is suitable for all ages. One of these is the *Galactic Girl Guides*, by Elaine Lee and Michael Kaluta, which is described as "mischievous girl-scouts in space."

Tundra also plans to publish material

TM

from some of today's up-and-coming stars. Most of these creators started work at smaller publishers, but were never able to finish the projects because of low distribution or lack of exposure. Mark Bode, son of the late underground comics pioneer Vaugn Bode, has been able to complete *Cobalt 60*, the post-apocalyptic tale begun in 1968 by his father. James O'Barr has able to finish his tragic, cult-favorite series, *The Crow* and is already at work on *Chinese Bones*, a cyberpunk tale that has been described as, "the Wizard of Oz meets Blade Runner."

Tundra has recently branched out in several different directions to ensure that they can gather together top talents from around the world. Kevin Eastman recently purchased *Heavy Metal* magazine, which already acts as a showcase for some of the top material being published in Europe. Plans are for several graphic novels to be previewed or serialized in *Heavy Metal* and then collected in hardcover by Tundra as part of their group of high-quality European graphic novels. This line has already started with *Margot in Badtown* and will continue with further adventures of Margot and the *Wind of the Gods* series.

"WITH TUNDRA, EASTMAN HOPES TO ELIMINATE THE FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED BY COMIC-BOOK CREATORS."

To help keep close contact with British creators, Tundra recently opened Tundra UK in London. While the two offices remain separate editorially, they join for the promotion and publishing of series. Some of these titles include *Lazarus Churchyard*, which originally appeared in *Blast* magazine, *Skin*, a controversial graphic novel that was rejected by three different publishers in England, and *White Trash*, a "road movie" in full color.

With such an eclectic batch of titles, Tundra has tried to place comics into different markets. Their sketchbook series has been successful in art supply stories where young art students can catch a glimpse of works in progress from top artists. Also, *ComicsTrips* by *New York Times* cartoonist Peter Kuper has been distributed to bookstores in order to capitalize on the recognition of Kuper's name outside of the comic-book field. Hopefully, Tundra will be able to make comics more visible in other areas by assisting creators in getting their characters licensed for other mediums. Plans are already underway for a Crow movie, as well as a pilot for an animated Mr. Monster series for the Fox network.

By utilizing strong ties with distributors and stories, Tundra is able to help some of the top talent in the field get their work to a larger group of people. In a short span of time, Tundra has assembled an impressive line-up that promises to redefine how comic books are seen by the public while keeping the creators involved every step of the way.

TUNDRA PUBLISHING LTD

brain food for the masses

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bernie wrightson **CAPTAIN STERNN**

rick veitch **BRATPACK**

jim woodring **FRANK**

dave mckean **CAGES**

michael gilbert **MR MONSTER**

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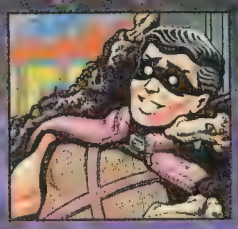

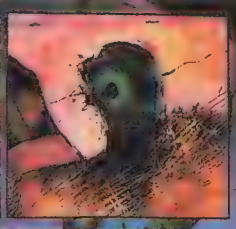

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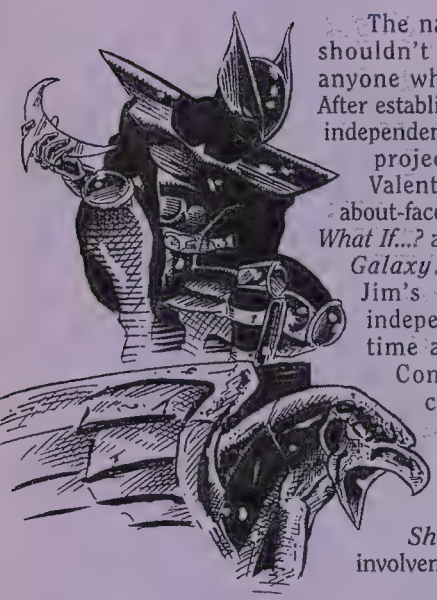
UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE HAWK

SHADOWHAWK

An Interview With Jim Valentino by Eric Stephenson



The name Jim Valentino shouldn't be unfamiliar to anyone who follows comics. After establishing himself in the independent market with such projects as *normalman*, Valentino did a complete about-face to take on Marvel's *What If...?* and *Guardians of the Galaxy*. This year marks Jim's return to the independent market; this time as a part of Image Comics Press. We caught up with Valentino at the new Extreme Studios to discuss his new series, *Shadowhawk*, and his involvement with Image.

Wizard: To start off, can you tell us a bit about how you became involved in Image Comics Press?

Jim Valentino: Image began with an old friend of mine, Rob Liefeld, wanting to get back into the independent marketplace—which is where he got his start. *Youngblood* was a concept he'd created five or six years ago. I met Rob when he was about 19 and *Youngblood* was one of the things he was doing then. He was hoping to stretch out a bit; away from Marvel, away from the X-books. He'd done a proposal from Malibu called *The Executioners*...which somebody got perturbed about and then he did a proposal for DC called *Team Titans* which, for one reason or another, didn't go through and it became *Youngblood*. Rob got to talking with a few friends...Erik Larsen, Todd McFarlane, and myself. The more we talked about what Rob was doing and the move he was making, the more we got to thinking that this was probably the right thing to do at the right time. Guys like Marc Silvestri and Jim Lee were brought in later and it all seemed to come together. It was more or less a gestalt.

Wizard: Some of the less charitable pundits within the fan press have tried to characterize the move from Marvel to Image as a move of ego.

Valentino: I love it when people who don't know me ascribe motives to me. It's not a question of ego, but one of proprietorship. It is the right to own your creations outright, to benefit from them in whatever way possible and more importantly, not to be told by a corporation that your contributions are insignificant and your relative worth to a project you've created is minimal.

Wizard: There's also been a number of accusations that the Image creators are too profit-minded...

Valentino: Where do they get this? Doesn't a creator have the right to benefit from his own creation? Don't his heirs have the right? And if not, who does? How many creators have to die in poverty while corporations benefit from the fruit of their imagination. I believe a lot of these people are personalizing because they don't care for a particular creator's style. This is the same fight fought by Jack Kirby, Siegel & Shuster, Milton Caniff and Will Eisner. The only things that have changed are the names of the people involved. We're fighting the same fight, and we'll continue to fight. Even if we fail here, this fight will be fought over and over and over again until it is won.

Wizard: A number of people seem to be under the impression that since Image exists, it has to be a case of "Image vs. Marvel." Is there much truth to that?

Valentino: No...even given my last answer, no. What's the point? None of us are so arroagant as to believe we can actually bring down the house Marvel built. They're a huge corporation with 30 years behind them, they've got tons of money... No, it's not "us versus them," at least not on our end. We're not interested in that. Many of our friends still work there. I still work there, so no, it's not that case at all.

Wizard: Why superheroes?

Valentino: Why not? Just because Marvel and DC do superheroes doesn't mean nobody else can. Valiant does. We do superheroes because that's what we want to do. I'm still enjoying myself in this genre. That doesn't mean I'm going to be stuck in this genre for the rest of my career, but as long as I'm having fun; why not do superheroes? I there some law that says I can't?

Wizard: Don't you feel this alienates older readers?

Valentino: I think that there's a certain age when you start to realize things like, say, Captain America's not going to die in an issue of his comic, that the only two people who died on Krypton were Jor-El and Lara and everybody else lived! I think when you come to those realizations, when the conventions start to bore you, rather than rant and rave about why superhero comics haven't grown up with you, it might be time to rethink your reading material. That just seems to be a logical step to me. Not every book can be *Watchmen*. You have to understand there are nine-year-olds out there, buying their first comic book and that every story is brand new to someone who hasn't read it before. This may all be old hat to you and I, who've read umpteen trillion comics, but to the kid out there who's just picking it up for the first time, this is filling him with the same sense of wonder I got reading old Mort Weisinger-era comics. Sure, they were stupid as the day is long, but I loved 'em! They were great! And, when the first Marvels started coming out, they were incredible. They had me excited and enthusiastic. I think older readers have really got to remember there are kids right now who are reading this stuff for the very first time. They're written for those kids. They're not written for 50-year-old men.

Photo: Al Ortega

"WHY NOT SUPERHEROES? IS THERE SOME LAW THAT SAYS I CAN'T?"

Wizard: It's also interesting, as you pointed out, that nobody seems that upset about Valiant doing superheroes.

Valentino: Yeah! Isn't that amazing? And nobody seems upset about the fact that Dark Horse's most successful books are based on movies...*Predator*, *Aliens* and all that kind of stuff, which are really superhero-type concepts, aren't they? So, why is it such a big problem that Image—guys who do superhero comics—why is it a problem that we're doing what we do? I don't understand that at all. It seems to be a double standard.

Wizard: Given that all Image characters are creator-owned, how will they interact within the Image Universe? How would a cross-over be worked out, for instance?

Valentino: Anyway we want them to, basically. The way I currently have *Shadowhawk* planned, Spawn will appear in the second issue, although he's not going to have a whole lot of interaction with Shadowhawk. Basically, the two of them are sort of cagey with one another. I just want to point out the differences between the two characters, because they're both kind of creatures of the night. After that, we're going to have the Dragon as a major guest-star in the fourth issue. The way this happens is I've called up Todd and Erik and asked if I can do this. They've said, "Well, let us know what the parameters of your story are and we'll work within that." Once I get the plots down, I'll call them up and I'll ask what they'd like me to change or whatever else I need to deal with. Everybody will interact the way they want to do it. It's pretty loose.

Wizard: Who will be overseeing the continuity of the Image Universe?

Valentino: Everybody will be, to an extent. You don't want to infringe upon another person's character any more that you'd want them to infringe upon yours. The golden rule is what really applies, as trite as that may sound. Let's face it—we're all Marvel artists and we're all used to team-ups and cross-overs and we know how they work. I think the real key here is mutual respect for each other's creations. I will respect Jim Lee's creations and if it comes to such a point that I can can use WildC.A.T.s somewhere, then I will respect whatever he and Brandon [Choi, WildC.A.T.s scripter] have done with those creations. That, to me, is the over-riding thing that allows cross-overs to happen in the Image Universe: respect for each other.

Wizard: What happens in the event a creator wakes up one morning and says, "I'd be happier at Dark Horse"...what happens if a creator decides to leave?

Valentino: We throw 'em a party! We say good-bye, everybody waves flags, we throw a big party and that sort of thing. If he wants to come back at any time in the future, we throw another party! Hey, you're welcome back! Now, if you want to take your character to Dark Horse and then you want him to team up with, say, my character, all you have to do is call each other up and say, "Hey, do you wanna do this?" Because you own your character and I own my character and nobody can say no. It's that easy. As long as everyone continues to respect one another, there shouldn't ever be a problem. Here's a good example of that. When Aardvark-Vanaheim split into Aardvark-Vanaheim and Renegade Press, before the split we had Cerebus scheduled to appear in *normalman* #10. Even though

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Chris Eliopoulos/Letters and Gregory Wright/Colors

On Sale In June From IMAGE COMICS!

image

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by that point *normalman* was not being published by Renegade Press. But, becuase Dave Sim and I had agreed to it already, Cerebus did guest-star in the tenth issue of *normalman*.

Wizard: So, really, the Image Universe can exist outside the confines of Image Comics Press?

Valentino: Oh, absolutely! We've talked about teaming up with literally everyone. I know Rob wants to team up with the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, for instance. He just wants them to pop out of a sewer in *Youngblood*. Valiant's characters would be great, it would be great fun to see a Magnus by Jim Lee. Why not blow away all those old, stuffy rules that don't work anymore? Why not create some new rules? Why not have some fun again? As long as no one is stepping on anyone's toes, we can do that.

Wizard: Tell us about *Shadowhawk*. Will this be a big departure from what you're currently doing on *Guardians of the Galaxy*?

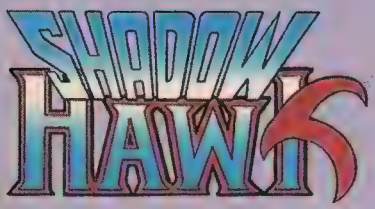
Valentino: Yeah, I tend to run my career real stupidly in that every single book I do is completely different from what I did the last time. So, I have to start all over with a whole new fan base because none of my old fans like the new stuff. It's sort of frustrating on the one hand, but on the other hand it keeps me interested in what I'm doing. *Shadowhawk* is gong to be very dark, very gritty, very realistic and very character driven, as opposed to plot-device driven, as is the case with the Guardians. It will be very moody...completely different fromthe Guardians; a complete departure. Shadowhawk's the ultimate mystery man. We're never privy to his thoughts. In the first issue, he says one word— he stops a rape, he throws the woman her dress and says, "Run." That's the only word he says in the entire book. The book is written and drawn in the third person..."You are Shadowhawk. You are moving through the city." We never really get a clear shot of him. He's always just barely coming out of the shadows or we just see his eyes, which are red. We don't know who he is. It's a big mystery. We start out with a bunch of suspects and we're going to continually introduce suspects. Some will be men, some will be women; they'll be black, white, oriental and all kinds of stuff, but we're not going to say who it is. The reader's going to have to figure it out. We'll give clues, but we'll also throw in red herrings, just like a good mystery novel. This is the first time, I think, that a superhero's secret identity has never been revealed to the reader. Another thing about Shadowhawk that's unique is his modus operandi. The underworld hates him, the police are after him; all because of this M.O. The general public doesn't even know about him and there's this woman who's trying to break the story about this vigilante out roaming the city. You see, Shadowhawk doesn't kill people. He catches guys committing crimes—muggings, rapes, that sort of thing—but he doesn't kill them. He feels that lets them off the hook too easily. What he does is break their spines. This way, even if the court system lets them go, they're still in a prison for the rest of their lives. They'll have to spend the rest of their lives paralyzed. As a result, the cops want him, because they don't consider him a superhero at all. It remains to be seen if the other Image Universe heroes see him as a superhero or not. As I said, the Dragon's the first guest-star and that's because the Dragon's a cop. I want him to play up the philosophical differences between the two of them. The Dragon is, from what Erik's told me, a by-the-book cop. I don't think he's going to approve of this guy's methods at all.

Wizard: Are you developing any other characters for Image?

Valentino: I'm developing several different ideas. I have a brand-new super-group I want to explore. They'll have ties to the 1940s and, possibly, to Supreme and also to Youngblood, through the Gate Corporation. They're called the New Alliance. I have another group, called The Others, but I don't really want to talk too much about them. I believe that will be my next project, after *Shadowhawk*. There are a few things here and there at different stages of development.

Wizard: Since you mentioned that The Others will probably follow Shadowhawk, does that mean *Shadowhawk* won't be a continuing series?

Valentino: *Shadowhawk* is scheduled to run four issues. Then, I'm going to take stock on it and see what people think. Most of the Image books right now are planned as finite series. One of the reasons behind this is we want to see how people respond to the series. Also, I think it gives us a chance to create more of a story. This way, it's something with a beginning, a middle and an end, which is something most comics don't have. Plus, in my case—and I know Rob and Erik feel the same way—a lot of us just have all of these ideas that we didn't necessarily want to give away to Marvel or any other company. "Holding back," as it were, in big parentheses and underlined! We have all these characters we'd like to get to. If response is good on *Shadowhawk*, then at some point I'll come back and do another *Shadowhawk*.



Wizard: What's the future look like for the Guardians of the Galaxy?

Valentino: In issue #27, we go to the 20th Century and do a cross-over with the Infinity War. The Guardians arrive in time to witness the Infinity War, but they don't really know quite what's going on. Their first stop is the moon, where they meet the Inhumans and they discover the secret of Talon. Since this will be coming out around the same time, I think I can say Talon is an Inhuman. That's been planned right from the start. They're going to stay in the 20th Century for a while and interact with some "real" Marvel Universe people. Then, they're going to go back to the 31st Century, except they get screwed up and go into a different timeline. First, they're going to meet Killraven and then they'll meet Kang, in the 31st Century, but a different 31st Century from their own. From there, we're probably going to deal with Protege's parentage. That will be the crux of the 50th issue, who Protege's parents really are, because he does have parents and his parents are surprising in how they tie into the Guardians mythos.

Wizard: Are there any major shake-ups within the group?

Valentino: Well, Starhawk's leaving and Aleta's coming back. We're also going to add a new member in the 20th Century, but I keep getting told "No" every time I bring up a person's name, so it's still up in the air exactly who that's going to be. This person will come back to the 31st Century with us, but other than that there are no major shake-ups other than the ones that have happened already.

Wizard: Other members of Image Comics Press have either voluntarily or involuntarily left their Marvel titles. Do you feel uncomfortable at all as one of the only Image creators still producing a book for Marvel?

Valentino: No. Everybody has to do what everybody's comfortable with and what everybody can do and I think so far the other Image creators have been real supportive of me. Let's face it, *Guardians of the Galaxy* is not a mega-seller like *X-Men* or *X-Force,* so I'm not taking home the same royalty checks as the other guys were. Also, I've got a very large family to support and everybody understands that. They all understand that it's just not feasable for me to drop the Guardians at this point.

Wizard: Your enthusiasm for your work is really contagious. Is there anything that really detracts from your enjoyment of doing comics?

Valentino: Comics are hard to do. You put in long hours and lots of sweat and blood into whatever you do. That's true across the board, for all comic creators. It's a hard job and the only thing that brings it down the most for me is the fact there are way too many people in this business who are mean-spirited and petty and they attempt to place their perceptions of what someone must be like upon people they don't know—based solely on whether or not they like that person's work. For me, that really grates. I have a really good friend, who's one of the most generous, least obnoxious people I've ever met in my life and yet, I've seen so many people who are so much less than him put him down in ways that are just unwarranted. Why? Because they don't like the way he draws. Well, if you don't like the way he draws, don't buy his funny books. I think that's what maintains the impression of comics as kid stuff. It's that level of immaturity that's so prevalent in this industry, that childishness that says one person's success demeans another person's or, in some way, affects their success. There's a quote from a song by Janis Ian, a singer I really like from the early 1970s, that is: "For they do not want to free you and they will not make you strong, but only drag you down in the hole they're coming from." I think that speaks to a whole lot of people on the periphery of this industry who need to either shut up and create something on their own or just walk away from it if it makes them that upset. I think people need some sense of perspective. After all, it's just comics we're talking about here! It's not as if anyone's discovering the cure for AIDS.

Wizard: Looking ahead a little, what do you think the future holds for Image?

Valentino: I believe that Image will continue to grow. In 1993, we're planning an Image cross-over series. I believe it will be one of those things that will help unify the Image Universe to an even greater degree and from that, we'll hopefully spread out with some new series. We are talking, literally, to everyone who is anyone in superhero comics. I believe that there's nothing but success ahead for the Image Universe. I really believe we're on the right track with the projects, with top-notch talent at the height of their creativity. I think the comics industry needs Image right now. I think it's needed a swift kick in the rear-end for quite a while and I think with new publications like *Wizard* and Image Comics Press...I think this is what's happening right now and I'm just glad to be at the forefront of it. I feel very privileged and honored to be counted among such company as Rob Liefeld, Jim Lee, Todd McFarlane, Erik Larsen, Marc Silvestri, Chris Claremont and Whilce Portacio. These are all top-notch talents and pretty decent people as well. I think the future looks great!

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WILDC.A.T.S

COVERT-ACTION-TEAMS

WIZARD looks at Jim Lee's hot new creation--by Patrick McCallum

"Is it true Jim Lee's leaving the X-Men?" "Did he get fired?" "Is he joining Image?" "What's WildC.A.T.s?" Pretty much what you'll hear if you listen in on any comic-book related conversation these days. (Well, that and how good Michelle Pfeiffer looks in leather...) Even with the incredible amount of press coverage, advertising and word of mouth surrounding this book, what the hell is WildC.A.T.s all about? Well, I'll fill you in with what I. know. First off, yes, Jim Lee is quitting the *X-Men* (as of issue #11) and he'll be joining the likes of Todd McFarlane, Rob Liefeld, Whilce Portacio, and a whole lotta' other people over at the newly formed Image Press. Jim Lee and newcomer Brandon Choi will be co-plotting and writing the book, Jim Lee will be penciling and Scott Williams will be inking (and for those who don't know, that's the same art team that was handling the X-Men for the past year. Mondo cool, eh?). The coloring will be handled by Joe Rosas, and the whole she-bang will be lettered by Mike Heisler.

When asked "Why WildC.A.T.s?" in an interview with Hank Kanalz, Jim Lee had to say "When we (Image creators) first talked about a shared universe and sharing the Image imprint, Rob (Liefeld) had already done two teams that essentially did what the F.B.I. and C.I.A. did, and that these heroes would be celebrities..." I immediately started thinking about a concept of how I could get a team together who didn't want to be celebrities. So we knew right away that it would be a covert team, a team with a hidden agenda. I always liked the concept of a team that had something to prove, or who did something that not everyone knew about."

Ok, this *WildC.A.T.s* (Covert Action Teams) thing is about a mysterious group of superhuman individuals who work behind the scenes and keep their very existence a secret. How you'd keep a team like this covert is beyond me. Any type of "Action Team" sounds like they'd make a lot of noise and probably attract a little attention. Maybe they tiptoe and use little guns. Anyway, here's the story behind this book. Emp (The little guy smoking the cigar) is the reluctant leader of the C.A.T.s, but he takes orders from a woman named Void. She's a human funnel to these powerful mystical beings that want to help protect the Earth. Now Emp, who's a hotshot C.E.O. of a big company, isn't too thrilled by this, but is willing to go along with the agenda for the betterment of the planet. But what happens when Emp finds out that there are two races of aliens vying for control of the Earth, and that he's going to have to take them on? Does he turn tail and fly off to Borneo? Heck no, he goes out and recruits some hot babes and big guys, forms WildC.A.T.s and prepares to kick some E.T. butt across the galaxy. To do this, you need the baddest of the bad, and that's what WildC.A.T.s is all about.

ROLL CALL:

EMP: The leader and financial support of the group; Emp also possesses electromagnetic powers that are yet to be revealed.

VOID: Not only is she a funnel for the mystical beings to talk to Emp, she can also bend time and space to her will, but it's not something that she has under complete control. While creating a teleporting disc for the team, they may accidently wind up thousands of miles off target, and even a few days before or after they left!

SPARTAN: A synthetic being created by Emp who has the ability to harness the bioelectrical energies that exist in all creatures and use them for his own needs. He's also put together better than humans. He's faster, stronger, more agile,etc...

ZEALOT: An alien of the same race as Emp, who's aged. Skilled in almost every weapon that exists, Zealot is one of the most dangerous members of the team.

VOODOO: Much like Dr. Doolittle, Voodoo can talk with the animals and when need be, take on certain animalistic characteristics.

MAUL: This purple dude is superhumanly strong and can increase his mass, but the bigger he gets the dumber he gets.

GRIFTER: Oooh.. The big mystery man. Like his name implies, he's very independent and won't appear a lot in the series. Not too much info available on this lil' bugger.

WARBLADE: Much like the T-1000 in T-2, Warblade can alter the metal parts of his body into any shape he wants, especially into blades.

OPPOSITE PAGE (Clockwise from center top): Void, Emp, Maul, Zealot, Voodoo, Warblade, Grifter, and Spartan shown in center.

JUNE

UNITY™ Chapter 17
The Final Battle!

UNITY™ Chapter 15
The death of a Major character, featuring virtually everyone!

UNITY™ Chapter 12
Finally! the true ORIGIN of Magnus! Guest-starring the Harbinger Kids!

UNITY™ Chapter 11
Archer finds Spiritual Oneness with the Mothergod. Guest-starring **Turok!**

UNITY™ Chapter 16
The birth of Kris's baby, guest-starring Magnus!

UNITY™ Chapter 14
Shadowman fights Archer & Armstrong.

1992

UNITY™ Chapter 13
Grievously wounded, Aric battles Pierce and her army!

UNITY™ Chapter 10
The Warriors battle for Geomancer's life! Guest-starring almost everyone!

COMIC BOOK CHARACTER RING PREMIUMS--

A SKYROCKETING

Comic book character ring premiums have been popular collectibles ever since they captured the imaginations of children over 50 years ago. Today, the same rings these children wore to emulate their favorite superheroes are commanding impressive prices on the collectible market. Comic book collectors who want to add a new twist to their collection would be wise to consider the potential of this expanding market.

Although people have been collecting ring premiums for years, I personally picked up on their growing collectibility late last year, when I made my first substantial ring purchase. In fact, because premium rings are becoming so incredibly collectible, I decided to offer an exclusive "diamond" ring premium to comic-book retailers attending Diamond's 9th Annual Seminar in Baltimore this year.

Featured above are the Superman membership ring from Action Comics and Superman secret compartment initial candy ring premium--both produced in 1940.

Diamond's ring is the latest addition to a long line of comic book-related ring premiums that have attracted collector interest. According to fellow collector John Snyder's "Comic Book Character Memorabilia" (*Comic Book Marketplace*, December 1992), character memorabilia has been a positive investment for over 20 years. As comic-book collectors diversify their interests to include related items such as rings, the value of these premiums will continue to climb.

Over the past few months, the market has seen an especially dramatic upswing in the value of ring premiums. I personally witnessed this increase during my recent sale of two Superman rings produced in 1940. The two ultra-rare rings—a Superman membership ring from *Action Comics* and a Superman secret compartment initial candy ring premium—were formerly unavailable in the market (only 10 of the 1,600 membership rings and seven of the secret compartment rings produced in 1940 are said to exist today). This past April, I sold both rings for $80,000 apiece. Now, the prices I received for these rings were not a fluke; fellow collectors have recently obtained $25,000 to $50,000 for the other ring premiums.

Most of the rings commanding high prices were produced from 1930 to 1950, during the height of the premium era. These rings were largely offered through radio broadcasts or in comic books. According to the April 1992 issue of *Comic Book Marketplace*, a Green Hornet plastic ring from the 1930s recently sold for $1,400. In the same issue, a Captain Marvel clothing store giveaway ring from 1946 and a Little Orphan Annie Altascope ring from 1942 were valued at $4,000 and $2,500, respectively.

These prices may seem out of the reach of

MARKET

BY STEVE GEPPI

many beginning collectors. But take heart—great ring premiums can be found within practically any price range. For example, a Green Hornet secret compartment ring from 1947 was valued in the April 1992 issue of *Comic Book Marketplace* at $500. *Tomart's Price Guide to Radio Premiums and Cereal Box Collectibles* lists a Superman ring produced by Nestle in 1975 at $25.

If you want to add even less expensive rings to your collection, you can choose from the many premiums currently being produced. One of the most recent giveaways at comic-book stores was the plastic Green Lantern ring with a glow-in-the-dark beacon. While the investment value of current rings such as this one is uncertain, it surely wouldn't hurt for you to pick them up.

The key to finding good deals on comic-book character ring premiums is diligence. Persistent collectors who scour flea markets and yard sales can often find valuable treasures for a fraction of their book values. Because this process requires a lot of time and patience, you may prefer to pick up your ring premiums at the comic, collectible, toy, and advertising shows held across the country. At these shows, you can purchase premiums from vendors who specialize in comic book-related merchandise. Although the prices are almost always higher than yard sale finds, this avenue practically guarantees you quick access to the premiums you're seeking.

Steve Geppi, president and CEO of Diamond Comic Distributors pictured with both Superman ring premiums.

"THIS PAST APRIL I SOLD BOTH RINGS FOR $80,000 APIECE."

A few select comic-book stores have added related premium items to their inventory. Now collectors can pick up currently-produced rings, as well as vintage premiums, while making their weekly comic-book purchases.

Comic-book collectors should find character-related ring premiums to be both an enjoyable and a potentially profitable investment. Happy Hunting!

Steve Geppi is President and CEO of Diamond Comic Distributors, the world's largest distributor of American comic books, graphic novels, and related merchandise. He is an avid, respected collector of comic books and related premiums, well known for his large collection of Silver and Golden Age comics.

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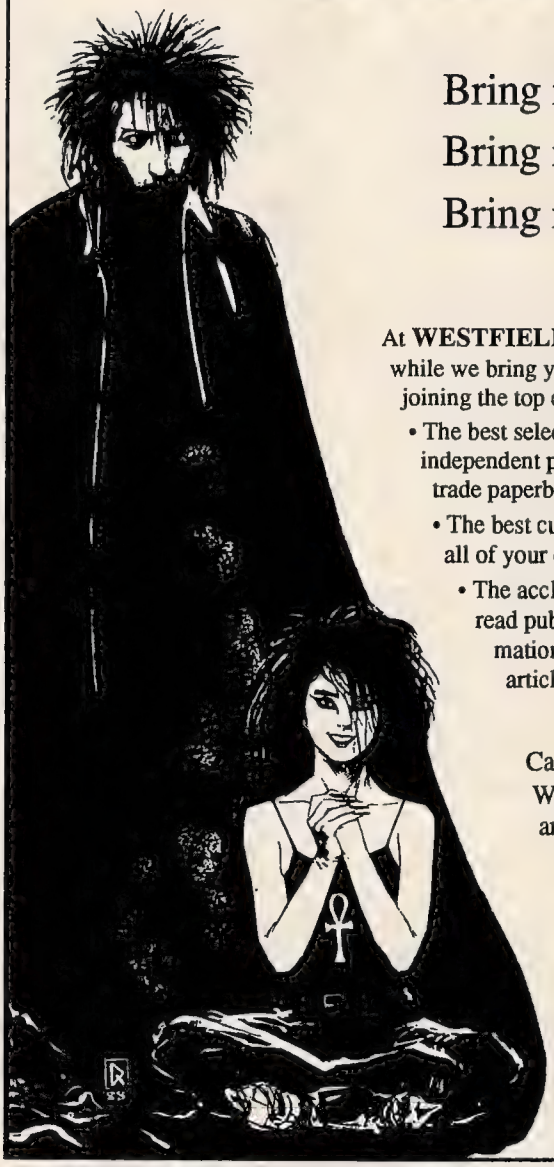
THE BRAT PACK

Welcome to the Brat Pack, where every month The Wizard talks with three young teenagers, Adam Kama, Mike Cecchini and Phil Colligan. Here we hope to find out what the younger kids, the heart of the comic-reading world, think of the current trends, and consider why some books make it and others don't.

WIZARD: This month we're going to talk about something that used to bother me: how other people act when they find out you read comics. Do you ever get those weird looks from classmates or friends?
Phil: Ummm... a little, but really not a lot. Sometimes somebody I sorta know will ask me "Why do I waste money?" I just tell them it's an investment.
WIZARD: Whenever I went to school with a comic, people used to look at me like I was a freak.
Adam: Yeah, some kids call me "social misfit" and say "hey, how's the latest issue of *Spidey?*" in a dumb voice. I just tell them to smoke their crack.
WIZARD: Do teachers ever give you a hard time about bringing comics to school?
Adam: No, my parents don't let me bring comics to school.
Mike: Kids in school just stare at me. They look at me, and if I explain what I'm doing, they go along with me in a patronizing way. Then kids I don't know come over and start telling me how cool Lobo/Punisher/ Wolverine is, that they're "awesome" and stuff. I hate that.
WIZARD: What if the big companies gave a harder push to introduce new readers into comics? Like putting ads in different type magazines, like *Nintendo Power, Dragon,* or even TV or radio commercials. This way a wider audience could get into comics, and maybe less people would consider comics "geeky."
Adam: I think it would work. Back when *Time* had Superman on the cover for Superman's 50th anniversary, I bought that issue because it was cool. I didn't collect comics back then.
Phil: Yeah, it would work. Ads in something like wrestling magazines would probably be cool. I see a lot of ads for comics in comics. That just tells kids who already know about what's coming out what's coming out.
WIZARD: You're right. There are too many ads for comics in comics, the companies need to branch out, and reach the non-comic fan. I remember when DC killed the second Robin and it was all over the news, everyone in my school was talking about it, even the teachers.
Phil: TV coverage is great. Look what it did for *Alpha Flight.*
Adam: Well, if you take a non-popular superhero [like Northstar] and turn him gay, it's cool but the public doesn't know him. Take a bigger character like, I don't know, Spider-Man, turn him gay and you'll have a much bigger public reaction.
WIZARD: Yeah, it would sell at first, there would be a big hype over it, but it would die down, and even backfire. Would you still buy *Spider-Man* if he started going out with Flash Thompson?
Adam: ...I think so.
WIZARD: We're getting off the topic here. Mike, how do you think the "out of comics" advertising would work?
Mike: Remember the *G.I. Joe* TV commercials for the comics, way back? They were great. They should have done the same for Spidey's 30th birthday. If they put Spidey commercials on during the six o'clock news, people would think "hey, Spidey's hip" and they would buy comics. Take Batman for instance. Back when his first movie came out, Bat-stuff was all over the place, and everyone was into it.
WIZARD: What about ads for other products in comics? Do you guys ever stop to read them, or just skip by and read the rest of the comic?
Adam: I look at the ads that are for other comics and whatever's on the back cover. I figure that's the most expensive ad so it has to be cool. I also look at the video game ads.
Phil: Basically what Adam said. I like the video game ads.
Mike: Same.
WIZARD: What about the interactive ads, the ones that make you chop up the comic to get a prize?
Phil: Unless they give away something really cool, I wouldn't do it. I don't like ruining my comics, and it's not fair that you are forced to buy two copies. I guess it's good for the companies though, it sells a lot of their books.
Mike: Unless the prize was really cool, I could live without the send-away-thing.
WIZARD: So if they were giving away a Buick, you'd do it.
Mike: Yeah, I'd buy two and chop one.
Adam: If it was cool, I would buy a second copy. Like the first *Robin* mini series, I bought two of the first one so I could rip the poster out.
WIZARD: Well, I hope some good comes out of this talk. This industry needs a push out into the open market, and maybe the right people will read this.

Mr. Sandman, bring me a dream.



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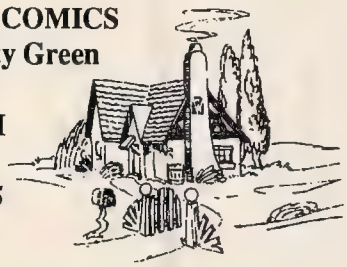

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THE ANIMATED SERIES

WIZARD BRINGS YOU AN ADVANCE LOOK AT THIS FALL'S HOT NEW SHOW...

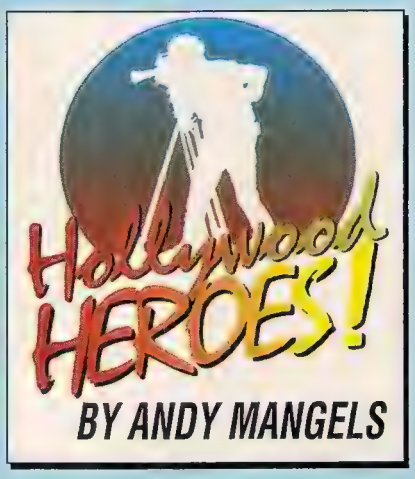
Bat-Mania is about to grip the country again with the release of *Batman Returns*. This time, though, Warner's hoping to extend the furor into the Fall.

About the time *Batman Returns* might leave theaters (assuming it's a hit), Fox Network will be setting up the premiere of *Batman: The Animated Series*. If you've been to a few of the major conventions this year, you may have seen the first episode, or at least a two-minute pilot. Now, we'll give you a look at the series-to-be!

Batman: The Animated Series premieres on Monday, September 7th at 4:30 P.M. and every weekday thereafter.

Sixty five all-new episodes are being produced by Warner Brothers Animation. The series is animated, according to the press releases, in "a lush and ornate film noir/art deco design." Having seen the promo reels from the show, I can vouch for the spectacular look of the series. It is startlingly Fleischer-esque (they produced the unparalleled *Superman* cartoons in 1941-43), with enough atmosphere for any Bat-fan. Some of the cues from the show are taken from Tim Burton's bat-vision and Anton Furst's Gotham City designs. It's widely believed Danny Elfman will provide the music for the show's opening.

What characters and plots will be in *Batman: The Animated Series*? Glad you asked.



Batman/Bruce Wayne (voice by Kevin Conroy) An obsessed, dark and violent hero, Batman is essentially the same character from the comics. He will not kill criminals (despite what he's done in both films), and sometimes takes on the disguise of small-time hood, Gaff Morgan. Bruce Wayne is the millionaire philanthropist heading up Wayne Industries and the charitable Wayne Foundation. Bruce's social skills are awkward.

Alfred (voice by Clive Revill) Alfred is a long-time friend of Bruce Wayne's slain father, and the only other person besides Dick Grayson who knows Batman's identity. When Bruce is visiting Europe or other places, Alfred is sometimes forced to don the Batman costume to give the illusion the Caped Crusader is still around. Alfred will provide some comedy relief in the show.

Robin/Dick Grayson (voice by Loren Lester) Yes, it's Dick

Grayson as Robin, but he's mainly away at college. When he returns to Wayne Manor on holidays (every four or five episodes), he dons the new Robin costume.

Batgirl/Barbara Gordon is a high-school student who works in the public library. A fan of Batman to the extreme, Barbara's prowlings as Batgirl may land her in trouble. She will guest-star in only a few episodes during the season.

Commissioner James Gordon (voice by Bob Hastings) Though he can't publicly support Batman, the incorruptible and hard-working Gordon occasionally has

JOKER™

clandestine meetings with the Caped Crusader. Gordon doesn't always like Batman's methods, and, though friendly to him, thinks even less of playboy Bruce Wayne's idle wealth.

Detective Harvey Bullock is unpleasant and grubby. He considers Batman a nuisance and a meddler in police affairs.

Officer Renee Montoya (voice by Ingrid Oilu) Renee is Gordon's assistant, a Hispanic single mother who's tough and cynical. She wants to make Gotham safe for everyone.

Mayor Hamilton Hill (voice by Lloyd Bochner) A weak politician, Hill only backs Batman when it's politically expedient.

Summer Gleason (voice by Mari Devon) She's the

GORDON™

anchorwoman of *Inside Gotham*, a tabloid news show which creates headaches for Batman as it sniffs him out and interviews his arch-villains. She's not fond of Bruce Wayne, and thinks there's something fishy about him. Or batty.

Maggie Paige is an Angela Lansbury-type eccentric artist who has captured Alfred's heart. Though she travels the world, when she returns to Gotham, it is to see Bruce Wayne's butler.

Harvey Dent/Two-Face (voice by Richard Moll, Bull on *Night Court*) Harvey is the charismatic and relentless golden boy of Gotham's legal circuit. Nicknamed "Apollo," District Attorney Dent is tougher on crime than Batman...until an explosion brings out his bad side and he becomes the coin-flipping criminal Two-Face.

The Joker (voice by Tim Curry) The clown prince of crime will

TWO-FACE™

reappear often in the series (5-10 episodes), using his evil wit and humor to bedevil Batman. Tim Curry, who voices the Joker, had been originally considered for the Joker's role in the first Batman film!

Catwoman/Selina Kyle (voice by Adrienne Barbeau) Selina is the darling of Gotham's jet-set, but her admirers are likely to be robbed by her as Catwoman. She only steals from the rich, and is attracted to Batman.

The Penguin resides in Gotham's underbelly. The hideous mutant creature uses trick umbrellas, and spouts bad Shakespeare.

Man-Bat/Karl Langstrom is a zoologist who becomes a monster when he injects himself with an experimental bat-blood serum.

PENGUIN™

Though Batman cures him in the first episode of the series, can he ever be sure he won't revert?

The Riddler/E. Nigma is a puzzle king whose conundrums baffle everyone but the Dark Knight.

The Scarecrow/Jonathan Crane is an ex-college professor barred from teaching who strikes back at society by using his fear-inducing devices to become the Scarecrow.

Poison Ivy/Pamela Isley uses her botanical skills and plant extracted love potions to leave a garden of crime behind in Gotham.

Mr. Freeze was cryogenically frozen and can only live in intense cold. Devoid of human feelings, he uses his cold gun on anything or anyone he wants.

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The Ventriloquist is a seemingly mild-mannered criminal who gives deadly orders through his dummy, **Scarface**.

Dr. Hugo Strange is a brilliant but twisted psychiatrist who plays the ultimate head games with Gotham's residents.

Clayface can reshape his face and body to resemble that of anyone...even bank presidents and Batman!

The Mad Hatter is a psycho who uses hats with special devices to commit his Wonderland of crimes.

Killer Croc is a savage reptile man who is king of the Gotham sewer systems. Great Kingdom there.

Ra's al Ghul is the mastermind behind an immense criminal organization who wants to force the world into perfection, with him as a ruler. This seemingly immortal man is father to **Talia**, a beautiful warrior who has designs on Batman. Other villains such as **The Calendar Man** and **The Gentleman Ghost** may well appear, and one episode includes a guest appearance by the beautiful "famed illusionist, **Zatanna**."

Batman will be aided in his war on crime with many bat-gadgets, all stored in his immense **Batcave** underneath the 150-acre Wayne Manor. Besides the **Batcomputer**, the manor contains a forensics lab, video monitors that cover Gotham City, a costume room (with various Bat-costumes), a gym, and a trophy room. In the garage are the sleek **Batmobile** and **Batcycle**, while in an underground canal floats the **Batboat**. In another area of the Batcave is the hangar area for the **Batcopter**, the **Batwing**, and the **Batglider**. Look for Batman to use the ever-present **Batarang**, **Batphone**, and **Batrope**, as well.

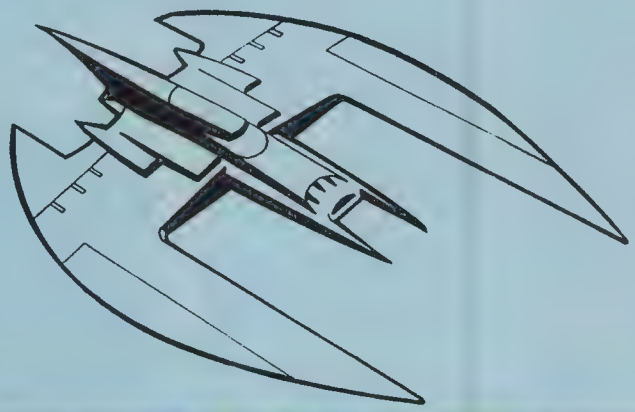
Batman: The Animated Series will be darker in tone than most cartoon series. Although killing and death will probably play little or no part in the stories, violence will not be shied away from by Warner. Indeed, the two minute pilot actually shows thugs shooting real bullets at Batman, a surprise in the *G.I. Joe* age of techno-weaponry which fails to cause harm.

Fox is considering premiering the series in prime-time, to let adult viewers know about it, and the show may even prove popular enough to air during evening hours as well. Everyone involved is expecting the series to be a smash hit; licensors are lined up around the block to get a piece of the Bat-action. Kenner is supposedly releasing an entirely new line of Bat-figures based on the cartoon show, to supplement their *Dark Knight* film figure line.

From what I've seen, *Batman: The Animated Series* looks like a must-see series. The animation and style of the show is lush and gorgeous, with scripts by many *Batman* comic writers past and present (like Marv Wolfman), the stories should be enjoyable. Keep watching the skies, as the Bat-Signal will be flashing soon!

That wraps up our first look at *Batman: The Animated Series*, although you can be sure we'll be turning the Bat-signal on again in months to come! Keep writing in with your topic requests. We'll see you next month, as we train our cross-hairs on the TV debut of DC's Man of Maskery, *The Human Target*! It's a date!

CATWOMAN™



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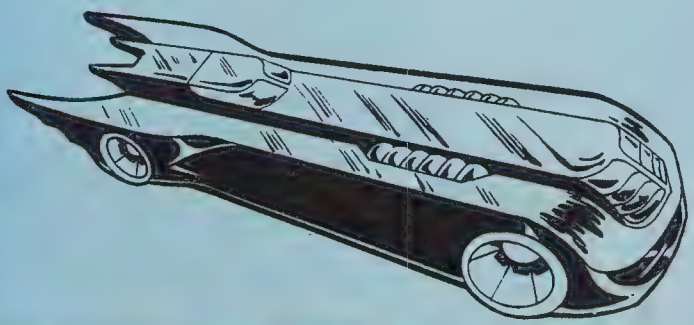

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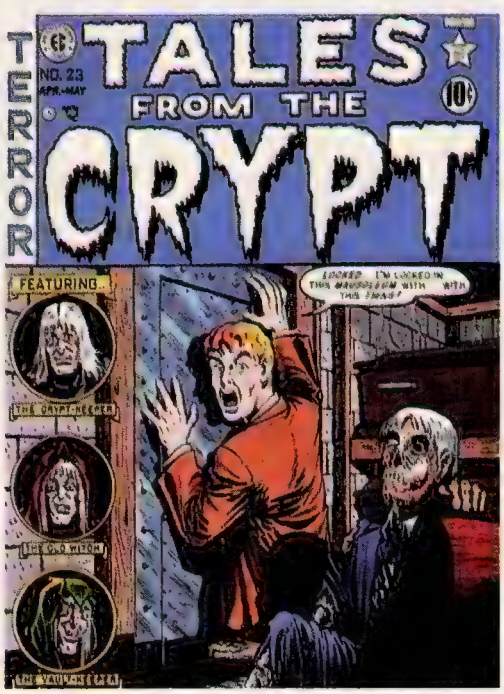
Palmer's Picks

Tom Palmer, Jr examines how EC comic's artists influenced the artists of today.

As I discussed last month, the EC comics of the 1950s had an immense impact on the comics industry. With the editorial vision of Bill Gaines and Al Feldstein, the EC line became a success, most notably with the horror and suspense comics. A high artistic standard was maintained both in writing and artwork. Both the ideas behind the comics and the artists behind them spawned many imitators, which I will discuss this month.

At the time, the EC comics had many imitators who copied the covers of the EC's with such titles as *Tomb of Terror* instead of *Crypt of Terror*, *Weird Tales of the Future* in place of *Weird Science* and *Weird Fantasy*, and *Unsane* instead of *Mad*. These comics also ripped-off the EC cover format, by placing their title in a box that covered the top third of the cover and by running a vertical bar with a slogan down the left side of the comic. The interiors also duplicated the EC format with scenes of violence and horror. What these imitations lacked, however, was the talent to produce stories and artwork that could match the EC comics.

After the clamor of the downfall of the EC line and the installation of the Comics Code, another notable EC flavored comic line came along. In 1964, James Warren started *Creepy*, a black-and-white comic magazine that, like *Mad*, was not under the control of the Comics Code. *Creepy* was later followed by *Eerie* and *Vampirella*, two other black-and-white magazines. Not only did these titles emulate the EC stories, they also used the talents of some of the EC artists, such as Al Williamson, Frank Frazetta, Reed Crandall, Joe Orlando, and Wally Wood. The Warren magazines also showcased the work of new talents like Bernie Wrightson, Richard Corben and Gray Morrow. These comics ran through the 70s and eventually faded away. Recently, *Creepy*, *Eerie* and *Vampirella* have enjoyed a revival of sorts with reprints and new stories from Harris Publications and Dark Horse.



Tales From The Crypt #35
© 1953 William Gaines

The work of the artists at EC, most notably Wally Wood, Frank Frazetta, Graham Ingels, and Harvey Kurtzman, had an obvious affect on the artists that are working in comics today. Wally Wood's science-fiction work for *Weird Science* and *Weird Fantasy*, with its abundance of spacecraft and high-tech control panels, is probably his most popular and well-known work. His clean brushwork and expertise in doodling machinery can be seen in just about any current comic that takes place in outer space.

Frank Frazetta's work for the EC comics and more importantly, his paperback book covers and fantasy poster paintings have directly influenced a number of artists. Arthur Suydam, Sam Kieth, and Mike Mignola have all picked up pieces of Frazetta's style either in their linework or their paintings.

Bernie Wrightson was also influenced by Frazetta, but he mostly drew inspiration from the horror work of Graham Ingels. His fine-line style can be

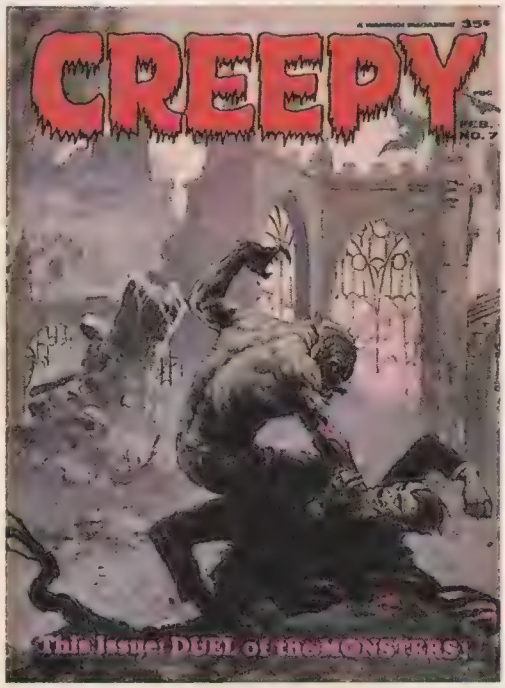
seen in Wrightson's early illustrations and work on the original *Swamp Thing* comics. Wrightson's blending of a wide range of styles, from Ingels to traditional pen-and-ink masters Joseph Clement Coll and Franklin Booth, was so effective and eye-catching that it even influenced the work of other artists, like Suydam and Kieth.

Harvey Kurtzman has spread his influence over a variety of artists. Most of his ideas and humor can be seen in the underground cartoonists like Robert Crumb and Art Spiegelman. Most of the independent cartoonists today like Peter Bagge and Jamie and Gilbert Hernandez also cite Kurtzman as a spiritual and direct influence on their work.

Aside from influencing the comic field today, the EC artists are still directly working in the business. Al Williamson is known today for his inking of *Daredevil*, the *Star Wars* newspaper strip, and various other projects. Frank Frazetta's fantasy posters and prints are still popular, even though he is no longer producing artwork regularly. Jack Davis is recognized today for his caricatures and advertising work, while John Severin is seen occasionally illustrating a war comic or a special project for various publishers.

RECOMMENDED READING

The original EC comics are collector's items today and will set you back about a hundred dollars for an average issue. Fortunately, they have been reprinted in a variety of formats:



Creepy #7

© 1965 Warren Publishing Company

The EC Library—These high-quality, hardcover books reprint the entire New Direction and New Trend lines in 13 sets—*Weird Science*, *Weird Fantasy*, *Weird Science Fantasy*, *Crime SuspenStories*, *Shock SuspenStories*, *Two-Fisted Tales*, *Frontline Combat*, *Tales From The Crypt*, *The Haunt of Fear*, *The Vault of Horror*, the New Direction titles, *Panic*, and *Mad*. Each set contains a number of hardcover books in a slipcase.

Gladstone/Russ Cochran Reprints—These comic-book sized color reprints are more affordable than the EC Library. They have run in a variety of numberings under several publishers for the past two years.

The work of some of the artists mentioned can be found in these books:

Bernie Wrightson: A Look Back—This humongous 360-page book highlights some of the best pieces of Wrightson artwork in black-and-white and color.

Small Wonders—This projected two-volume set collects the funny-animal work of Frank Frazetta. The first volume has been published by Kitchen Sink Press. Also, five volumes were published by Bantam Books collecting Frazetta's artwork starting in 1975.

The Art of Al Williamson—Published by Blue Dolphin Enterprises in 1983, this book is probably a little difficult to find.

Star Wars—This three-volume hardcover set was published by Russ Cochran collecting the entire run of the Star Wars newspaper strip by Archie Goodwin and Al Williamson.

BRUTES & BABES

DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS WITH BART SEARS

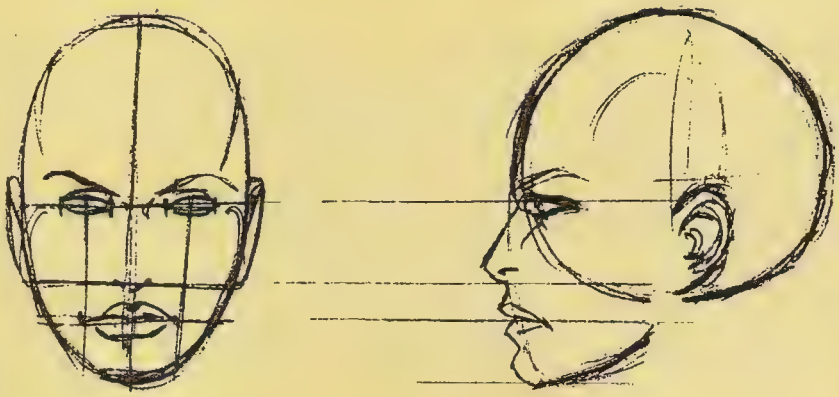
Hi... Once again I'd like to welcome you to this, the third installment of BRUTES and BABES . Well, it seems I've been cramming so much information into this instructional column that the good people over at Wizard are having trouble fitting it all into these two (all-too-brief) pages. So, before we move on, here's something that ties into last month's torso and potato sack lesson...

Here we have a nice, action-filled BUBBLE figure. Look carefully at the potato sack printed over the torso area. There is really not a lot of twist (about thirty degrees), but, quite a bit of movement and action is implied. I could have exaggerated the twist by throwing his left arm back behind his body and by thrusting his right arm across the front of his torso, but I wanted to leave his torso clear to show the anatomy of the twist.

Get some tracing paper and check it out!

The Wolverine shown here was drawn over the bubble figure above. Please notice how the lines were hardened and edged, almost chisled from stone...muscle isn't bloopy! See how the individual muscles aren't outlined, there's just an impression of the whole indicated. Particular finishing styles don't matter at this stage, only good, solid drawing counts. Start on your own potato sacks and bubble twist figures. Send them in and let's see how you're doing! All right, let's move on to a look at HOT BABES...

Drawing attractive or even unattractive female faces is at best a tricky, difficult process. It isn't enough to learn one pretty face and just draw it over with different hair and/or costume distinctions, each female face that you draw should have as much individuality, as much character and life as each male face that you can imagine. Also, contrary to popular belief, not every woman in comics is or should be a stunningly beautiful woman. I have been criticized for drawing Power Girl with a square jaw, but personally, on her rough-and-tumble, ready to brawl, full-of-vim-and-vigor personality, I felt that a strong, square jaw was fitting and attractive.Enough of that, *let's draw*!



The head is basically egg-shaped. Divide the head in half vertically and horizontally. Divide the EYE LINE (horizontal line) into five equal sections. Mark the point midway between the EYE LINE and the bottom of the egg-shape (the chin) . Mark the point midway between the nose line and the chin. Drop two vertical lines from the middle of each 'eye' . Fill in the features as shown. You now have a basic female head. Note how the proportion transfers to the side-view.

Here I've drawn some different female heads. Please note how few lines are used to give form and expression. Always remember when drawing women, less is more! Each line you add to a woman's face adds five years to her age. Study each head, pick the differences between each face and why they are attractive or unattractive, then practice drawing them yourself, dissect them and learn.

Thanks for reading... I hope you can learn something from these "lessons." It's difficult for me to try to convey enough information in this limited space but please bear with me, I'll do the very best that I can. Join me next month as we dig deeper into the art of drawing hot babes.

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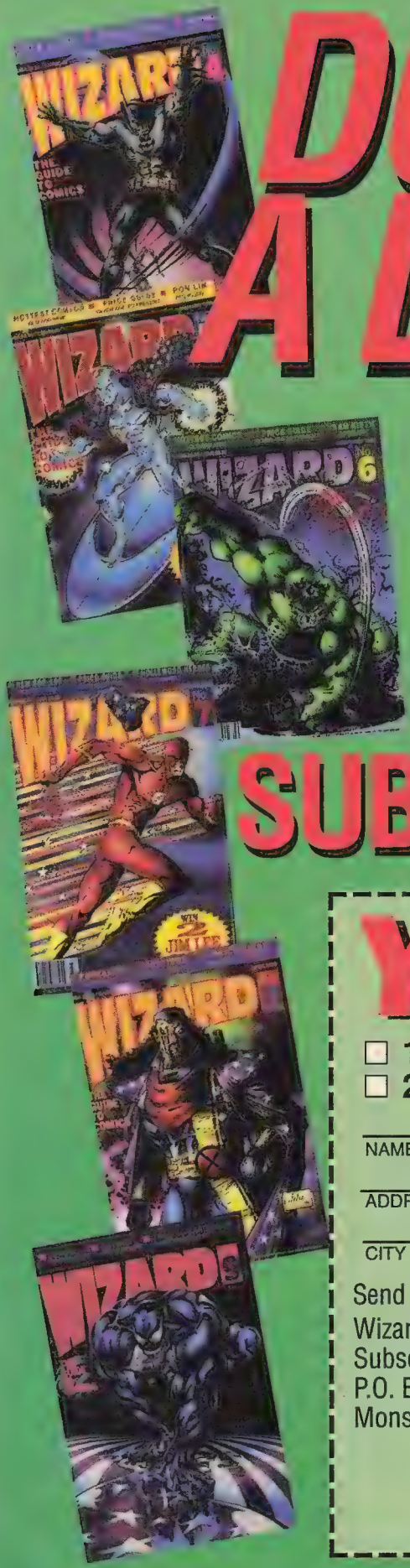

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This Month's Number ONES

Comic book collectors place a great deal of importance on the #1 issues. Since it's tricky to determine whether a book will succeed, you have to choose your comics very carefully and wisely. #1 issues have been known to appreciate considerably when a series becomes very popular. Here we have compiled for you all the #1 issues shipping for August. Happy Hunting!

American: Lost In America #1
from Dark Horse

Manhunter: American Secrets #1
from DC Comics

Universal Soldier #1
from Now Comics

Alien Contamination #1 Fantaco
Ambush Bug Nothing Special #1 DC Comics
American: Lost In America #1 Dark Horse
The Bat #1 Adventure
Batman Gallery #1 DC Comics
Battle Angel Alita #1 Viz
Beverly Hills 90210 #1 Personality
Big Someplace #1 Iconographix
Bill The Bull: Burnt Cain #1 Boneyard
Blood is the Harvest #1 Eclipse
Bomarc #1 Night Wynd
Bone Head #1 Fantaco
Brigade #1 Image
Cadillacs & Dinosaurs 3-D #1 Kitchen Sink
Captain Harlock: Fall of the Empire #1 Eternity
Caravan Kid #1 Dark Horse
Children of the Night #1 Night Wynd
Crime Chronicles #1 Tome
Dark Horse Classics #1 Dark Horse
Deadface #1 Dark Horse
Dean Man Walking #1 Boneyard
Deathstroke Annual #1 DC Comics
Digitek #1 Marvel UK
Evil Dead: Army of Darkness #1 Dark Horse
Falls The Gotham Rain #1 Comico
Flaxen #1 Dark Horse
Hammerlocke #1 DC Comics
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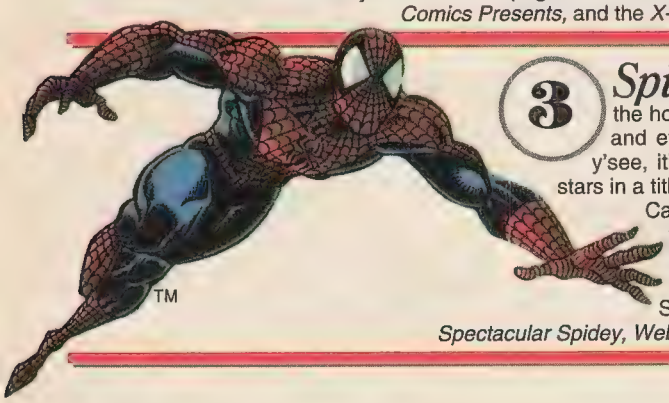
Hero Alliance Special #1 Innovation
Hybrids #1 Continuity
Illegal Aliens #1 Eclipse
Krey #1 Caliber
Lobo: Blazing Chain of Love #1 DC Comics
Martian Manhunter: American Secrets #1 DC Comics
Modern Classics: Freaks' Amour #1 Dark Horse
Monkey Wrench #1 Iconographix
Morbius #1 Marvel
Neon City: After The Fall #1 Innovation
Neverland #1 Caliber
Parts Unknown #1 Eclipse
Peter Cannon: Thunderbolt #1 DC Comics
Raika #1 Sun
Reddevil #1 AC Comics
Rescueman #1 Best
Rio at Bay #1 Dark Horse
Robin Annual #1 DC Comics
Shock Suspen-Stories #1 EC Comics
Steel Angel #1 Caliber
Tales From The Crypt #1 EC Comics
Team Titans #1 DC Comics
Tekworld #1 Marvel
Thing: Climate of Fear #1 Dark Horse
Thumbscrew #1 Caliber
TMNT Meet the Conservation Corps Special #1 Archie
Universal Soldier #1 Now
Urth #1 Continuity
Weird Science #1 EC Comics
WildBRATs #1 Fantagraphics
WildCATs #1 Image
Wind of The Gods #1 Tundra
Young Gun #1 AC Comics

WIZARD'S TOP 10 HOTTEST HEROES & VILLAINS

Every month in the pages of Wizard, you see books climb up and down the charts and up and down in price. Why do they do this? It may be a hot artist, or a hot writer, but more often than not it's the characters that turn up the steam. Wizard will show you the hottest bad boys (and bad girls) in the universe, and hope they're happy with their ratings.

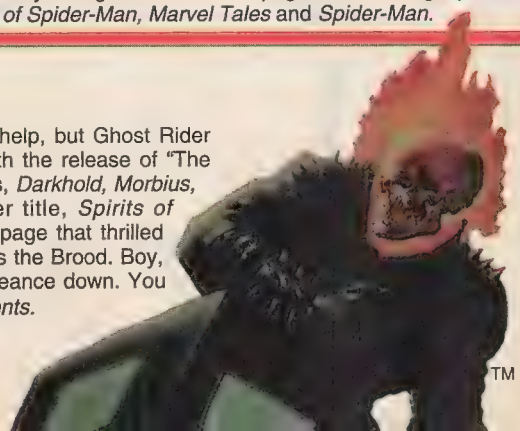
1 *Cable:* Geez Louise, you'd think that somebody could dethrone Cable from his #1 spot. The bionic bad boy has dominated popularity polls here at *Wizard* for months, and if nothing else, he's getting more popular. In a move that's sure to attract tons of fan attention and a little bit of controversy, Cable quits as leader of X-Force, leaving the kids to fend for themselves. But don't worry, Cable fans will get plenty of Nate as he stars in his own two-issue limited-series this summer, where he comes face to face with...Stryfe! Looks like Cable's gonna be king of this little section for a while longer.

2 *Wolverine:* Hanging on to the #2 spot, everybody's favorite magnet-attracting mutant just doesn't have the oomph to take the #1 spot. What keeps him above everybody else on the charts, though, is his no-nonsense "mess with me and you're toast" attitude, which may seem a little common-place today, but Logan was the first to really make it famous. His success can also be attributed to this summer's hot storylines running through his book (like the death of Mariko, the villainy of Sabretooth and the mystery of Maverick), and his guest appearances in *Captain America* and the *Infinity War.* You can catch him every month in the pages of his own title, *Marvel Comics Presents,* and the *X-Men.*

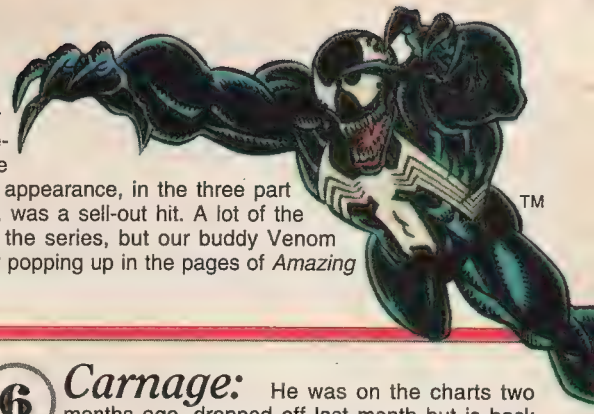


3 *Spider-Man:* It's Spidey's 30th anniversary this year, the hologram anniversary issues of his titles are selling like crazy, and everybody loves the web-head, so why isn't he #1? Well, y'see, it's like this. Spidey is big-time popular, but when he guest stars in a title somewhere, it's nowhere as hot as when Wolverine or the Cablemeister makes an appearance. But who knows? With all the cool stuff going on in his comics, and the imminent release of the new futuristic Spider-Man title, *Spider-Man: 2099,* Spidey may boot those guys out and go for the gold. Spidey swings around in the pages of *Amazing Spider-Man, Spectacular Spidey, Web of Spider-Man, Marvel Tales* and *Spider-Man.*

4 *Ghost Rider:* Not that he needed the help, but Ghost Rider definitely got a boost of popularity this summer with the release of "The Rise of the Midnight Sons" crossover series of books, *Darkhold, Morbius, Nightstalkers* and the second monthly Ghost Rider title, *Spirits of Vengeance.* Also, issue #25 of his series featured the pop-up page that thrilled fans, and #26 and #27 guest-starred the X-Men in their battle vs the Brood. Boy, even killing his human host can't keep that nutty Spirit of Vengeance down. You can also catch Ghost Rider in the pages of *Marvel Comics Presents.*

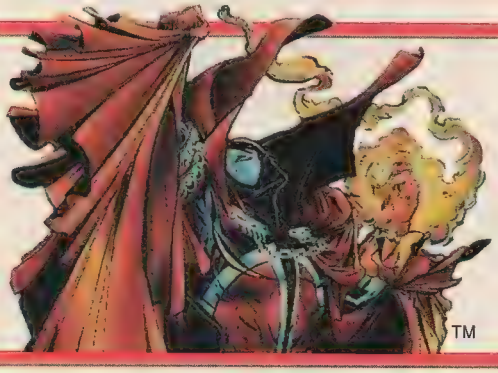


5 ***Venom:*** Hotter than Dr. Doom, Sabretooth or Thanos, Venom is Marvel Comics' #1 villain. With his awesome look and eerie other-worldly abilities, he can make your skin crawl (get it? Venom...skin crawl?...forget it). His latest appearance, in the three part "Carnage" series running through *Amazing Spider-Man* #361-363, was a sell-out hit. A lot of the credit must go to the Venom-Spawn Carnage's appearances in the series, but our buddy Venom doesn't take a back seat to anybody. You can catch this lil' bugger popping up in the pages of *Amazing Spider-Man* from time to time.



6 ***Carnage:*** He was on the charts two months ago, dropped off last month but is back with a vengeance. The response to this character has been enormous. The issues where he was featured as the main villain *(Amazing Spider-Man* #361-363) sold phenomenally well, and the first two chapters even went to a second printing. And if anybody out there thinks Carnage is really dead, c'mon, this is Marvel we're talking about. If they can bring back Thanos by simply opening a "soulchest," you can bet your last symbiotic dollar that we'll be seeing good ol' Cletus Kassady again.

7 ***Sabretooth:*** Heyyy...three villains in a row, how cool is that? Wonder who would win in a three-way fight? Hmm, Sabretooth would get creamed, and since Carnage beat the crap out of both Spidey and Venom combined, Carnage would probably slap Venom silly. Uh oh, can you say "getting off the topic?" Sabretooth is best known for being Wolverine's arch-nemesis, though he's tangled with Iron Fist, Cage, Spider-Man and the Black Cat. Sabretooth can be found as a semi-regular supporting cast member in the pages of *Wolverine,* with occasional guest shots in the *X-Men.*



8 ***Spawn:*** The first non-Marvel/DC character here in the Top 10 hot-chart. It figures that it's a McFarlane character. Whatever the Toddmeister touches seems to turn to gold. Spawn hails from the newly formed Image Comics Press, and is really a cool little muchacho. With strong ties to the supernatural, and everyone everywhere attracted to McFarlane's style, Spawn has a good chance of becoming a much hotter character, as fans of similar books like *Ghost Rider* and *Spider-Man* are sure to be drawn to this book. The character's similar to the Spirit of Vengeance, and no Spider-Man fan can resist the power of McFarlane's pen.

9 ***Lobo:*** What the frag? Why is the main man down here at #9 instead of #1? Well, DC characters just aren't as hot as Marvel characters, and even a character as hot as Lobo is affected by this phenomenon. The fact that Lobo doesn't have a regular series, just a bunch of mini-series, is also to blame. But even through all that, Lobo has taken his place up here on the charts with the big boys, and perhaps all the special Lobo projects that are coming out back to back will push this bastich up to a higher number on the charts. You can also check Lobo out in the pages of *L.E.G.I.O.N. '92,* and the *Guy Gardner: Reborn* mini-series.

10 ***Blaze:*** The original Ghost Rider, John Blaze, has definitely become a hot character in comicdom. Reintroduced about a year and a half ago as the pony-tailed, razor-stubbled bad boy of today, Blaze has appealed to fans of the Punisher and Nomad, and has the mysterious magical edge that appeals to the fans of the new Ghost Rider as well. Now, with the release of the new *Spirits of Vengeance* title that he shares with Ghost Rider, he should be burning up the road to the top of the charts and get out of the crappy #10 spot.

CABLE, WOLVERINE, SPIDER-MAN, GHOST RIDER, VENOM, CARNAGE, SABRETOOTH and JOHNNY BLAZE™ & © 1992 Marvel Entertainment Group. SPAWN™ & © 1992 Todd McFarlane. LOBO™ & © 1992 DC Comics.

WIZARD

Critical Mass #3

Artist: Denys Cowan
Writer: D. G. Chichester
Publisher: Epic
Release Date: March 1990

Terror Inc. appears to be selling well in most areas, but only time will tell if this book's a winner.

Hey, this book's got two things going against it. For one thing, it's part of the Shadowline saga from a few years back, and it's a prestige format book to boot (and we all know that those things never go up). So why the hell is this book in here? Hey, it's the first appearance of...Cable! Psych! No, Cable doesn't make an appearance or anything, but this is the first appearance of that limb-ripping, whisker-wearing bad boy from Marvel...Terror! Yup, that weird lookin' guy from the new horror series, *Terror Inc.*, makes his debut here in *Critical Mass.* Not only that, but we learn that Terror's real name may or may not be Shreck. No big deal, but we thought you might like to know. A lot of comic dealers are excited about the release of *Terror Inc.* and expect a great deal from this title. Whether or not this series is a hit is still up in the air, but if it is, *Critical Mass* #3 is the book to own. Even though it guides for $5 with a $4.95 cover price, you can find this lil' gem in most comic dealers super-discount boxes for half a buck. All the more reason to buy it. So if you think *Terror Inc* is going to be a hit, what are you waiting for?

COMIC WATCH

Amazing Spider-Man #101

Artist: Gil Kane
Writer: Roy Thomas
Publisher: Marvel
Release Date: October 1971

How cool would it have been to buy the first appearance of Ghost Rider before the new *Ghost Rider* series came out? Or buy a *Spidey* #129 before the Punisher got hot? Or a *Hulk* #181? How about a *Fantastic Four* #48? All mondo cool books that went nuts almost overnight because comic fans suddenly went crazy for a certain character. Well, if you act fast enough, you don't have to add *Spidey* #101 to your list of "How cool if...?" list. Y'see, not only is this a cool old Spidey book, it's also the first appearance of Morbius, the living vampire. Yup, that guy who got his own book this month and is part of that nifty "Rise of the Midnight Sons" crossover. What makes this book real promising is what it's all about. Like Ghost Rider, Morbius is one mean hombre who not only fights crime, he beats the bejeebees out of the criminals who commit them. To leave his...ah...mark on his victims, Morbius chomps down on them and drinks their blood. This is a gritty, hard superhero series in the tradition of *Ghost Rider,* and if it does even a fraction of what *Ghost Rider* did in the market, *Morbius* is the book to bank on.

Also check out *Spidey* #13, part one of the two-part "Sub City," starring Morbius by Todd McFarlane.

Amazing ART

The Showcase Of Future Comic Book Illustrators Of America!

GREEN GOBLIN™ & © 1992 Marvel Entertainment Group

Elisha Thurston Jr.

Fayetteville, NC

WOW. We've received so many great pieces of fan artwork that we couldn't possibly choose one winner each month. From now on, Wizard will show as many great covers as we possibly can on these pages for the rest of the world to see. And who knows? One of our participants has already been contacted by a comic company looking for artists. You could be next!

All you need to do to see your work on these pages is send your artwork with your name, address, telephone number and age to:

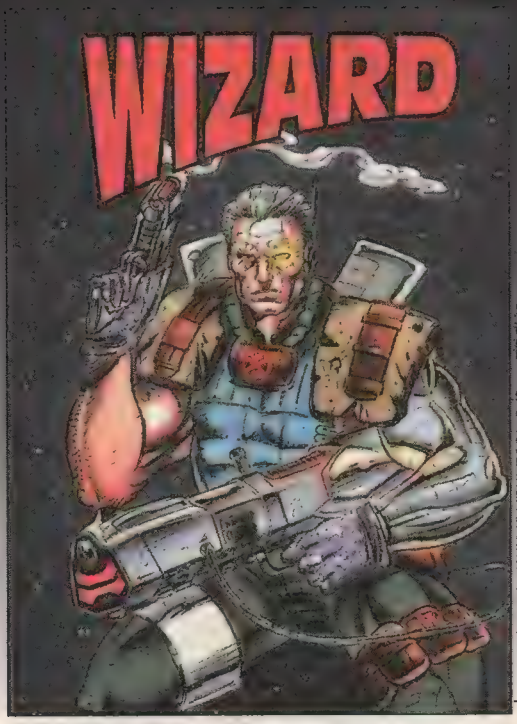
Amazing Artists
Wizard Press
P.O. Box 648
Nanuet, NY 10954-0648

Submissions can be on any form of un-lined paper or cardboard, and can be in any medium (oils, crayon, line art, etc). Artwork must not be larger than 8" x 11 1/4". Do not fold, bend or roll artwork - **mail them flat to avoid damage.** All submissions are non-returnable and become property of Wizard Press. Send yours today!

WOLVERINE and PSYLOCKE™ & © 1992 Marvel Entertainment Group

Richard Fournier

Temple City, CA Age: 21



Henry Martinez
New York, NY Age: 25

Michael Potter
Tampa, FL Age: 28

Peter De Tina
Vancouver, BC, Canada Age: 18

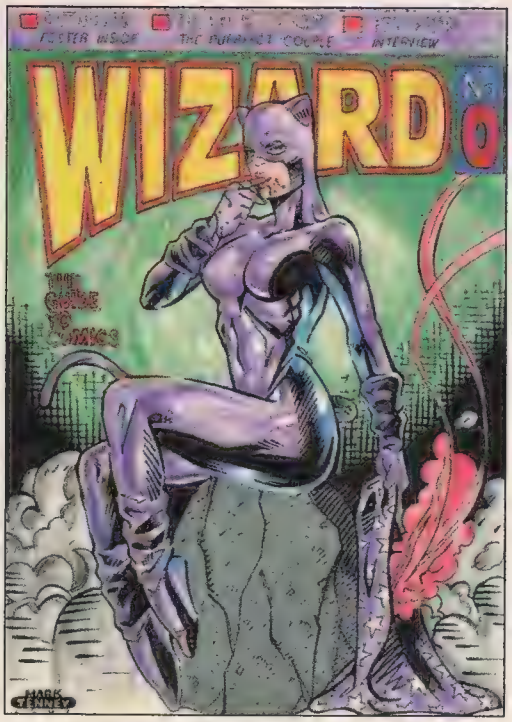
J. Anthony Martinez
Hartford, CT

CARNAGE™ & © 1992 Marvel Entertainment Group

Tony Yau
San Fransisco, CA

SOLAR™ & © 1992 Western Publishing Co., Inc.

Rob Csiki
Vernon, CT Age: 25



CAT-WOMAN™ & © 1992 DC Comics

Mark Tenney
Houston, TX Age: 20

IRON MAN™ & © 1992 Marvel Entertainment Group

Luis Angel Garza
McAllen, TX Age: 19

SPIDER-WOMAN ™ & © 1992 Marvel Entertainment Group

Billy Maus
San Diego, CA Age: 22

HULK ™ & © 1992 Marvel Entertainment Group

Stephen Toth
Burnsville, MS Age: 24

WIZARD COSTUME CONTEST

Okay, so you guys can draw really well, make up cool superheroes, draw on tiny little envelopes and even re-paint action figures. But do you have the rocks to dress up like an idiot and have your picture shown to hundreds of thousands of people? C'mon, enter into the first annual Wizard costume contest and show the other readers of Wizard what you can do! And don't just stick to comic books, go into Star Wars, Star Trek, monsters, Smurfs, anything! The best entries will be shown in the October issue of Wizard, and the best outfit will win a limited edition gold Spawn trading card! So pull your imagination out of mothballs and get crackin', there's gold to be won!

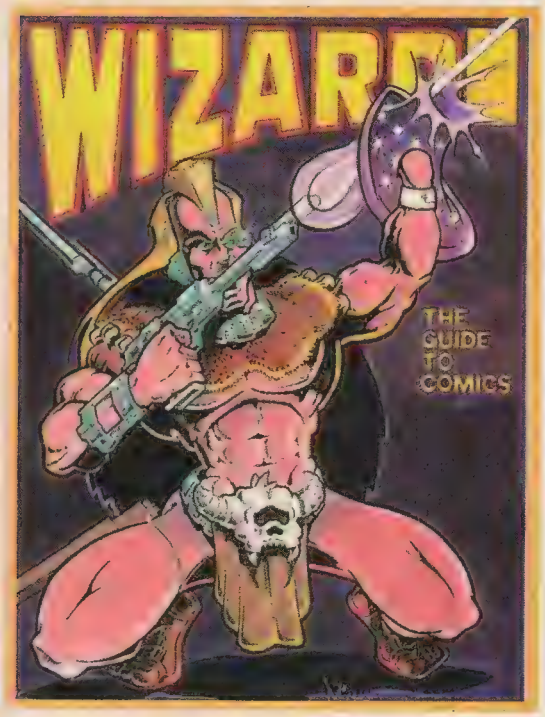
LOBO ™ & © 1992 DC Comics

Send your photo with your name, age, address, and a short description of why you like the character you're dressed as to: Wizard Costume Contest, P.O. Box 648, Nanuet, NY 10954-0648.

All entries non-returnable and become property of Wizard press.

My Kind Of HERO

If making your own covers in *Amazing Art* wasn't enough for you, now you can make your own heroes in *My Kind Of Hero*! Send your best ideas (a picture & info as seen below), with your name, address, age and phone number to: My Kind Of Hero, Wizard Press, P.O. Box 648, Nanuet NY 10954-0648. See the bottom of pg. 46 for instructions on how to send us your characters. Good luck!



The Wizard Warrior

created by Michael Walker
Benson, NC

Name: Mygartz
Occupation: Keeper of the Peace for the tenth quadrant of the now desolate Earth.
Citizenship: The planet Cryzon, where most of Earth's population has migrated after the nuclear holocaust.
Marital Status: None
Base of Operations: The Tenth Quadrant (centered in an area near Death Valley)
Height: 7' 3"
Weight: 275 lbs
Eye Color: Blue Green
Hair Color: Blonde
Powers: Mygartz is a highly trained mercenary from the planet Cryzon. At birth a highly advanced computerized electrode system was implanted in his spinal column. This system emits tiny electrical signals to his body that enhance his muscular and neurological structure to super-human proportions. Unfortunately, this system, along with his arsenal (laser weapon, 6" lance/spear, visual and hearing enhancer) are fueled by Earth's now abundant solar energy. A situation that more or less confines his existance to the barren wasteland of Earth. When the people of Cryzon settled their disputes, there was no need for mercenaries. Therefore Mygartz and others like him were elected as "envoys" to police the Earth planet, now populated with convicts, mutants, wizards, sorcerers and warlords.

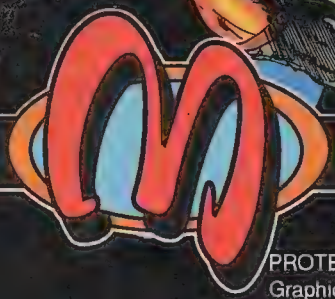
Twin

created by Eric Treadaway
Knoxville, TN

Secret Identity: Billy Tout
Current Occupation: Detective for N.Y.P.D.
Citizenship: U.S.A.
Legal Status: No Criminal Record
Marital Status: Single
Base Of Operations: New York
Height: 6" 2"
Weight: 230 lbs
Eye Color: Green
Hair Color: Blonde
Powers: Twin has the abitilty to consciously manifest an identical, ghost-like dupicate of himself. This copy aids Twin in such a way that when the two meld back together, Twin absorbs the memories and thoughts of his invisible partner. This uncanny ability allows Twin to have actually been in two places at once.

MALIBU DOES IT AGAIN!

PROTECTORS™



MALIBU COMICS

Very Independent

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WIZARD NEWS

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON THE WORLD OF COMICS

Death's Head II Returns As Regular Series

Marvel UK In High-Gear

DEATH'S HEAD II and THE X-MEN™ & © 1992 Marvel Entertainment Group.

October 1992 will feature the return of Marvel UK's hugely successful Death's Head II, the polyphrenic cyborg, who's first four-part mini-series sold an average of 200,000 copies per issue. The sales forced a second print on the first two issues, and broke all sales records for the British company.

Liam Sharp's artwork and Dan Abnett's writing will again bring the reader on an adventure through space and time, pitting Death's Head II against both formidible old foes and introduce awesome new adversaries. In the first issue, Death's Head II will team up with the X-Men.

Simon Coleby, the cover artist to *Warheads* #4 through #6, will take over as Warhead's regular artist as of issue #6. Issues #4 and 5 guest-starred X-Force, and issue #6 will feature Marvel UK's own Death's Head II. When Warhead Gregory fights Mephisto in #6, the consequences will change Gregory for the worst.

Marvel UK also announced that the Digitek four-issue mini-series will be postponed until October. Digitek tells the story of Jonathan Bryant, head of Mys-TECH's Psi-Key project, who's become more than human--he's Digitek!

Marvel UK may not have the recognition of the regular Marvel Universe characters, but Marvel is giving these new titles huge pushes with constant guest-stars by today's hottest characters, and the work of up and coming artists like Liam Sharp have gotten the attention of many collectors.

Tarzan's Second Malibu Series

Walt Simonson and Matt Wagner are featured in Malibu Comics' new full color Tarzan: *Love, Lies and The Lost City*, the follow-up 3-issue mini-series to the acclaimed *Tarzan The Warrior.*

Set for August, Tarzan: *Love, Lies and The Lost City* will begin a story which re-establishes Tarzan's relationship with La, the high-priestess of Opar. Opar was the first "lost city" to appear in the original Tarzan novels, and many Tarzan fans at the time considered the Tarzan/La relationship much more interesting than the Tarzan/Jane marriage.

TARZAN ™ & © 1992 Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.

New X-Men Action Figures?

Rumor has it that Toy Biz is now producing a Bishop and Havok action figure, which would be released as late additions to the regular 1992 Toy Biz Marvel Superheroes line. Fans have been demanding more X-figures for a long time.

August Delcared "Image Comics Month"

Every Image Comic solicited for the month of August will contain a coupon unique to each book. There will be seven different coupons in all. The titles included are *CyberForce* #1 (by Marc Silvestri), *Shadowhawk* #1 (by Jim Valentino), *Brigade* #2 (by Rob Liefeld, Hank Kanalz and Marat Mychaels), *WildC.A.T.s* #2 (by Jim Lee, Brandon Choi and Scott Williams), *Savage Dragon* #3 (by Erik Larsen), *Spawn* #4 (by Todd McFarlane) and *Youngblood* #0 (by Rob Liefeld).

Readers who mail back all seven coupons will receive a copy of *Image* #0, containing original short stories featuring the stars of the Image Universe.

According to Publisher Dave Olbrich, "Now that the Image Universe is taking shape, we wanted to offer a special promotion to all of the fans who helped make it possible."

CONSERVATION CORPS™ & © 1992 Cartoon Guise

Archie Introduces Conservation Corps

Archie will introduce the Conservation Corps in July with *TMNT Meet the Conservation Corps* Special #1. The Conservation Corps (Water Buffalo, Greenhorn, Stone Hedgehog and Firefly) are a group of superpowered environmental heroes who battle to save the world from the evil Oily Bird. The special will feature pin ups by Sergio (*Groo*) Aragones, Stan (*Usagi Yojimbo*) Sakai, Tom (*Roachmill*) McWeeney, and others.

Flaxen Coming In July

Dark Horse Story Inspired By Real-Life Playmate

"Flaxen" was originally developed as the logo for the Golden Apple comic book stores in Los Angeles. The name was chosen by a contest among the store's customers. Suzie Owens, former Playboy Centerfold (March, 1988), was chosen to represent Flaxen as Golden Apple's "Living Logo" at promotions and conventions. Public response to Susie and the character led to the development of the comic book concept.

Flaxen: The Comic (coming this July) is based on the real-life experiances of Susie Owens. Flaxen is the superheroine alter-ego of Cora Street, a "dumpy and physically dull" nurse. Although she posesses superpowers, Flaxen's main mission is to help people realize their full potential and dreams by developing their own positive qualities. She is an in-charge, positive role model.

Even though *Flaxen* features a beautiful girl as the heroine, it is absolutely not a "sex comic." Nor does it feature exploitive "camera angles" or nudity. It has the look of a standard "Marvel-type" comic with "good-girl" overtones.

Flaxen ($2.95) will be written by Mark Evanier (writer of *Groo*) and Rich Howell will pencil the artwork. The issue will feature pin-ups by Dan Spiegle, John Romita, Sergio Aragones, Steve Rude and others. There will be a photo centerfold of Suzie Owens posing as Flaxen.

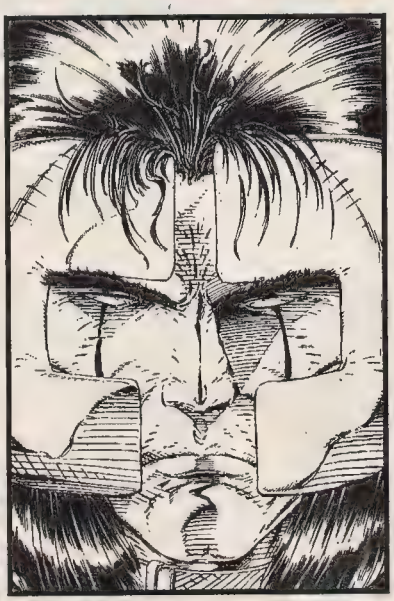
FLAXEN™ & © 1992 Golden Apple Industries, Inc. Photo courtesy Golden Apple.

FLAXEN™ & © 1992 Golden Apple Industries, Inc.

Image On Fire

Creator-Owned Company Gets Fan Approval

With Image Press firmly in the people's minds after the release of Youngblood #1 and Spawn #1, the fans seem to have given the big "thumbs up" to this new creator-owned comic company. With talent like Todd McFarlane, Jim Lee, Rob Liefeld, Marc Silvestri and Jim Valentino in their stable, expect some top-notch books to be produced and sales records shattered. It looks like those who turned their noses up at Image are about to get a nose bleed.



JOHN PROPHET™ & © 1992 Rob Liefeld. Youngblood issue #2 page 5 courtesy Extreme Studios.

Next Month...

COMING AT YOU WITH BOTH BARRELS!

TWO AWESOME ISSUES

THE GUIDE WIZARD TO COMICS

WIZARD #13

Free Marvel Masterpiece Psylocke™ and Erik Larsen Savage Dragon™ trading cards!
Joe Jusko Reveals All!
The Spirit of Vengeance Rides Again!

WIZARD SPECIAL EDITION (COMIC-CON 92)

Two Free Trading Cards!
Triple Gatefold Image Press Cover!
In Depth Interview With Marvel Legend Stan Lee!
Articles on Comicdom's Companies and Artists!

Collecting Comics In The 90s

By Patrick McCallum

Ah, the cross-over series. This is when there is a major storyline running through a large series of books, which can be read separately as self-contained chapters, or together to form one major storyline. Examples of these are *Secret Wars II* and *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, which had mini series that had the "meat" of the story, and had cross-overs in a multitude of books. Smaller cross-overs are ones that have no special series outside of the monthly titles, like Inferno, that ran through the mutant titles a few years back, and Galactic Storm, the Avengers cross-over of this year. What this does for the company is it puts a great deal of their titles in the spotlight tying them into the more high profile titles. For instance, if you tie *Quasar* into the *Avengers* and *Thor*, you can bet the hair on your butt it's going to sell more copies that month, and a couple of these new readers may actually stick around to become regular *Quasar* fans. Now this is a really cool idea. It gives the fans the chance to see their favorite heroes and villains, who would normally not mix it up. On the business side, it allows the companies to create a great deal of hype over their project, and increase the sales of their lesser titles. That's all fine and good, but things have changed drastically in the past few years. The big crossovers that once had a reason to be are nonexistent. No longer is there a *Crisis on Infinite Earths* to redo the entire DC Universe, or a *Legends* to create a new JLA. Crossovers are now just plain stories that force kids to buy books they wouldn't normally touch, with no effort going into the series. A good example of that is the entire "Infinity Gauntlet/War" thing. The Infinity Gauntlet started in the pages of *Silver Surfer*, led to *The Thanos Quest* mini series, back to the *Surfer* and culminated in the *Infinity Gauntlet* mini series. This was done very well, it was fast paced, exciting and had a reason to be. And even the crossovers to the series were kept at a minimum, only the books that had a reason to tie-in did. It was clean, well thought out, perfect. The sequel, *The Infinity War*, is nothing like that. The only reason this was put out was to sell a lot of copies, and sell tons of cross-over titles. Okay, I know what you're saying. "Every title is designed to sell," but this is different. No real "oomph" was behind this series. It was not carefully laid out, it wasn't the climax to any big storyline, it was just there. And where the original series crossed over into only a handful of books, the second series involves 50 different cross-over comics. Now that's a money chomper. Don't get me wrong, I'm not down on Ron Lim, Jim Starlin or any of the fine people connected to *The Infinity War*. My beef is how it's handled. No longer are these big crossovers done to sell books *and* entertain the public. They're just there to sell books. Is it just me? Could be. *Infinity War* #1 was the second best selling comic that month (according to Diamond Comic Distributors) and is selling quite well in the retail stores. A lot of this I imagine is to the hype surrounding it's release, as well as fans buying it based on the *Gauntlet*'s quality. It's really a shame that this is happening, but it's just part of the bigger problem with comics today. Most comics are candy-coated with holograms or what not, and even those without a gimmick hyped up and then are just a big let down. What's even worse is that the new generation of comic readers don't seem to know any better. Comics are selling better now than they ever have. What does all this mean? Most comic buyers are more interested in buying pretty crap that quality comics. If everyone who's belly-aching about the state of comics wants it to change, they'd better change their buying habits. The only way to tell the companies what you want is to start buying what you like, instead of being content with being force fed with a glow in the dark gate-fold spoon.

COMIC BOOK CBIQ INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

Oh, sure. Everyone knows who Wolverine and Superman are, but how much do you really know about comics? Can you--can *anyone*--score a perfect 30?? (no fair peeking in the price guide for clues!) Answers on page 165.

How well do you fare?

score	rank
0-6	Bantha fodder
7-12	Alliance Cadet
13-18	Rebel Soldier
19-24	X-Wing Pilot
25-29	Admiral Ackbar wanna-be
30	Jedi Knight

1) Which herald of Galactus was created first?
A) Terrax
B) Gabriel
C) Nova
D) Firelord

2) The superhero team known as The Crusaders are part of what comic universe?
A) Marvel
B) DC
C) Impact
D) Image

3) Predators only hunt on Earth when it's...
A) all-you-can-eat night at the Sizzler
B) during a thunderstorm
C) during a lightning storm
D) really, really hot

4) Team Titans, the new supergroup from DC, hails from:
A) the past
B) a parallel world
C) the future
D) the negative zone

5) Which character died during Valiant's "Unity" crossover?
A) Magnus
B) Rai
C) Aric
D) Gilad

6) Clint Barton is better known as...
A) Hawkeye
B) Crossbones
C) Antman
D) Bullseye

7) In which of the following comics did Batman first appear?
A) Batman
B) Legends of the Dark Knight
C) Shadow of the Bat
D) Detective Comics

8) Superman's X-Ray vision cannot penetrate...
A) Iron
B) Lead
C) Quartz
D) Jelly Donuts

9) Which of the following heroes once shot and killed a terrorist with an Uzi?
A) Spider-Man
B) Captain America
C) Quasar
D) Vision

10) Where did Eddie Brock get the Venom costume?
A) On a far off planet during Secret Wars
B) From Reed Richard's laboratory
C) In an old church
D) In a deserted alley way

11) Frenzy, Stinger and Time Shadow were introduced as part of what team?
A) Alliance of Evil
B) Mutant Liberation Front
C) The second Brotherhood of Evil Mutants
D) Squadron Sinister

12) The Golden Eagle, ex-member of the Teen Titans, was killed by...
A) Deathstroke the Terminator
B) Brother Blood

C) The H.I.V.E.
D) One of the Wildebeest Society

13) Why isn't Star Trek: The Next Generation as good as the original?
A) Boring storylines, just neat special effects
B) The girls don't wear mini skirts
C) The Captain's bald
D) All of the above

14) Which of the following characters doesn't have a flaming head?
A) Dormammu
B) The Flaming Carrot
C) Firestorm
D) Nikki

15) Marvel's Dragon Man was created by...
A) Dr. Doom
B) Diablo
C) Ultron
D) Machinesmith

16) Where did the Next Men come from?
A) A C.I.A. project
B) Disneyland
C) A government project
D) The Soviet Union

17) Which of the following Valiant characters are related to each other?
A) Armstrong & The Eternal Warrior
B) Solar & Rai
C) X-O Manowar & Magnus
D) Ax & Archer

18) Battlestone is the ex-leader of what team?
A) Youngblood
B) Brigade
C) WildC.A.T.s
D) Cyberforce

19) Which of the following characters has applied for membership in the Frightful Four?
A) Anaconda
B) The Melter
C) Captain Ultra
D) All of the above

20) Brainiac is the father of...
A) Garryn Bek
B) Captain Comet
C) Vril Dox
D) Gareb Shamus

21) Which of the following characters was almost killed by The Scourge?
A) Death Adder
B) Constrictor
C) Basilisk
D) Mirage

22) Who gets more babes?
A) Tony Stark
B) Ricardo Montalban
C) Captain Kirk
D) Northstar (hah!)

23) Jocasta, Ultron's female robotic creation, was patterned after what superhero?
A) She-Hulk
B) Ms. Marvel
C) Sersi
D) Wasp

24) The big, white, hairy creature that attacked Luke in the beginning of The Empire Strikes Back was a...
A) Tusken Raider
B) Wompa
C) Bantha
D) Taun Taun

25) Which of the following Marvel Superheroes gets away with running around naked?
A) Iceman
B) Pip the Troll
C) She-Hulk (...ahhh...)
D) Silver Surfer

26) Which of the following actors/actresses never played a villain on the Batman TV show?
A) Shelley Winters
B) Vincent Price
C) Liberace
D) Richard Dreyfus

27) Who has never been impersonated by a Skrull?
A) Thanos
B) Iron Fist
C) Alicia Masters
D) Colossus

28) Which Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle character is also a title of a Grateful Dead song?
A) Krang
B) Shredder
C) Casey Jones
D) Shuma-Shume

29) What do Magneto, the Crimson Dynamo, and The Titanium Man have in common?
A) They all have the letter "A" in their name
B) They're all villains
C) They're all mentioned in a Paul McCartney song
D) All of the above

30) Who has never had the power of Thor?
A) Don Blake
B) Steve Rogers
C) Albert Simmons
D) Eric Masterson

Cover SHOTS

How well do you remember your covers? Below, you will find six pieces from covers published over the last year. Can you tell what covers they are from? Answers on page 165.

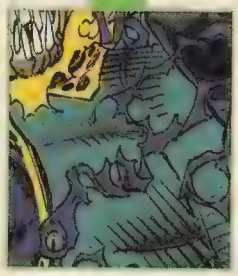
A

C

E

B

D



Word JUMBLE

Do you really know your stuff? I mean really know your stuff? The jumbles below, when properly unscrambled, form comic related words. Answers on page 165. Example: RODDOM DR DOOM

1. ORM
_ _ _

2. HISRUNEP
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

3. KUHL
_ _ _ _

4. GINKNIP
_ _ _ _ _ _ _

5. RANOM
_ _ _ _ _

6. LIVERDEAD
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

7. TOPKRYN
_ _ _ _ _ _ _

8. HIPNEXO
_ _ _ _ _ _ _

9. LOARS
_ _ _ _ _

10. LUVNAC
_ _ _ _ _ _

11. ZADRIL
_ _ _ _ _ _

12. PERLSIGUS
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

The Wizard Of Cards

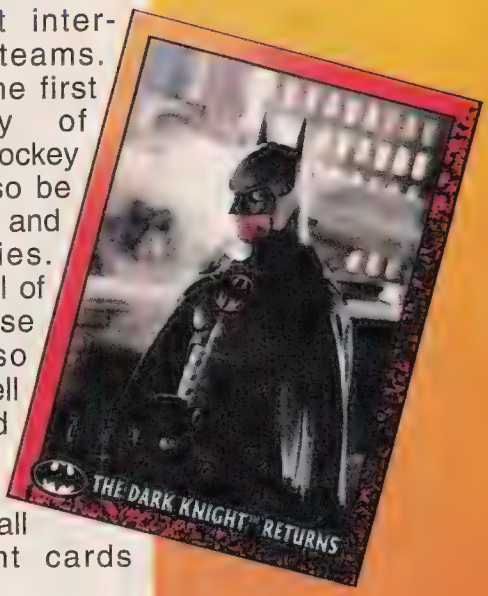
By Stephen Shamus

This month I'd like to discuss many new and exciting products due out in the near future. Comic Images will be releasing a Spider-Man 2 set with six new prism cards numbered 7-12, which will tie-in to the original six prisms in the Spider-Man I set. The first series sold out quickly, and so should these, given the fact that the print run will be as limited as the first. The prism cards were very popular in the first set and they each sell for about $15. Comic Images was able to integrate the hologram with a four-color printed picture, creating a fire in the market. They're also releasing a second Ghost Rider set, which should be very popular, especially since Marvel is making a really big push with the *Spirits of Vengeance*. Comic Images will also be releasing an Youngblood set by Rob Liefeld. These, too, will have prism cars and are sure to be hot. The Boris 2 cards and Olivia cards also have six prism cards, which really look great.

Smokey's Ultimate Trading Card Company has some great new non-sports sets coming out. They have also received an exclusive license for eight international hockey teams. These will have the first cards of many of tomorrow's young hockey stars. They will also be releasing a Popeye and Betty Boop series. There's a good deal of history behind these two characters, so these should do well with the young and old collectors alike, especially with the huge popularity of all the entertainment cards coming out.

Last but certainly not least, Topps will have two versions of cards based on Batman Returns. Topps will release a glossy set in wax packs that retail for $.55 per pack. They will also be releasing a "Stadium Club" Batman set. These cards will be glossy-coated on both sides, have silver foil printing on the front, and have very high quality pictures. The stadium version will be limited in quantity and hopefully the "Stadium Club" set will do for non-sports cards what the football, baseball and hockey versions did for the sports card.

See ya next month!



Topps's Batman Returns and Smokey's Popeye trading card sets are sure to be some of the big hits this summer.

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WIZARD Contest

Grand Prize:

A set of Spider-Man #1-5 signed by Todd McFarlane.

First Prizes (3):

A set of the bagged *Spider-Man* #1 (black and green variants) or a *Ghosr Rider* #1 (1st print)! *YOUR CHOICE*!

Second Prizes (6):

A set of the hot new Marvel Series III trading cards (cards only) or a numbered, limited gold edition Wizard's Spawn trading card! *YOUR CHOICE*!

Third Prizes (12):

A copy of *Spectacular Spider-Man* #189 (1st print) or a Kenner Dark Knight action figure! *YOUR CHOICE*!

Congratulations

to the winners of March's *Amazing Spider-Man* contest:

Grand Prize:
Jeff Keeler - Shelby, MI
First Prize:
Justin Havins - Wasilla, AK
Nathan Howard - Dayville, CT
Second Prize:
Randolph Dixon - Theodore, AL
Phong Huynh - El Monte, CA
Jamie Kindle - Van Alstyne, TX
Michael Marchese - Crete, IL
Colin Reece - Tucson, AZ

№ 12

1. Created the Silver Surfer:

2. Leader of the Infinity Watch:

3. "_____" of Vengeace:

4. Villain of the Infinity War:

5. Recently expelled from the Green Lantern Corps.:

6. Brother to the Eternal Warrior:

7. Carnage:

Enter Now To Win!

Official 1992 WIZARD Contest #12 Entry Form

YES, enter me in the 1992 Wizard "Spider-Man" contest for a chance to win a set of *Spider-Man* #1-5 signed by Todd McFarlane!

Name (please print clearly) Age

Phone #

Home Address

City State Zip

Store Name

Address

1st Prize Choice check one:
- ☐ Bagged *Spidey* #1's
- ☐ *Ghost Rider* #1

2nd Prize Choice check one:
- ☐ Marvel Series III
- ☐ Gold Spawn Card

3rd Prize Choice check one:
- ☐ *Spect. Spidey* #189
- ☐ Dark Knight figure

Spider-Man Code:

Wizard Clue: Todd put Spidey through this...

Contest Rules

Answer the questions in the boxes supplied. In each answer you will find a circled letter. After you have completed all the questions, the circled letters from the answers, when unscrambled, will form the Contest Code Word. Write this word on the official entry form supplied below or a 3x5 index card.

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, their immediate families, and Calypso.
Print your name, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number with area code, and the name of the store where you purchase your comics, and the Spider-Man Code on an "Official Entry Form" or a standard postcard. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry individually to "Spider-Man Code #12," P.O. Box 648, Nanuet, NY 10954-0648. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the name of the prize winners and are not transferable. Only one prize winner per household. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof.
All entries must be postmarked by August 24, 1992 and received at contest headquarters by August 25, 1992. Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries.
Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winners will be selected in a random drawing from all properly completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on August 26, 1992 by Wizard Press. One (1) grand prize- *Spider-Man* #1-5 (both Black & Green covers of #1) autographed by Todd McFarlane. Three (3) first prizes-set of bagged *Spider-Man* #1, Blue and Green covers or one copy of *Ghost Rider* #1 (first print, third series) (winner's choice). Six (6) second prizes- full set of Marvel Series III trading cards (cards only) or a limited numbered gold Wizard's Spawn trading card (winner's choice). Twelve (12) third prizes- one *Spectacular Spider-Man* #189 or a Kenner Dark Knight action figure (winner's choice).

For a list of winners, which will be available after October 1, 1992, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Dark Knight Winners," P.O. Box 648, Nanuet, NY 10954-0648.

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Early in my studies, the Wizard made it clear that the sole purpose for an acolyte's existence is the pursuit of wisdom. He said, "You, acolyte, exist solely to pursue wisdom. From information comes knowledge, from knowledge comes wisdom, and from wisdom comes enlightenment." Taking these profound words to heart, I began a meticulous and often tedious search for any information available. This studying eventually produced results, forming a base of knowledge from which to make analyses and draw conclusions. This, I believe, is the correct path toward wisdom, although I have had access to certain beneficial tools (i.e. the Crystal Ball). Wisdom, for some, leads eventually to enlightenment; for the comic book collector or investor, wisdom leads to increased value and return.

Recently, while strolling merrily toward enlightenment, I have become interested in what seems to be a promising new title offered by the industry giant, Marvel Comics: *Spirits of Vengeance* #1. Further study of *Spirits of Vengeance* #1 reveals these general categories of information relevant to assessing its collectable potential: 1) Marvel's aggressive promotion of the "Midnight Sons," 2) the creative team assigned to *Spirits* #1 , and 3) comparisons to similar collectable situations in the past.

I. The summer of 1992 will witness a major crossover promotion by Marvel Comics : "The Rise of the Midnight Sons."

This six-part crossover includes:

Part 1 : *Ghost Rider* #28 Writer: Howard Mackie, Penciler: Andy Kubert. This issue kicks off the Midnight Sons series. Advance order sales have been strong across the country--a good sign.
Part 2: *Spirits of Vengeance* #1 Writer: Howard Mackie, Penciler: Adam Kubert (see analysis throughout).
Part 3: *Morbius* #1 Writer: Howard Mackie, Penciler: Ron Wagner. This issue brings back the popular anti-hero known as the living vampire. Popularity has been confirmed by strong back-issue sales of *Spider-Man* # 13 and # 14, Morbius's two most recent appearances.
Part 4: *Darkhold* #1 Writer: Chris Cooper, Penciler: Richard Case. The storyline developed for this book should spark interest amoung fans who prefer a darker, more macabre plot. Included with this first issue is a huge Midnight Sons poster drawn by both the Kubert brothers.
Part 5: *Nightstalkers* #1 Writer: ? , Penciler: ?
Part 6: *Ghost Rider* #31 Writer ? , Penciler: ?

All six "Midnight Sons" issues will be polybagged with individual posters depicting the major characters. The posters can be laid adjacent to form one giant mural depicting the stars of the "Midnight Sons." Marvel has preplanned a substantial co-operative advertising campaign that should increase exposure on the local level where the comic market is driven by the individual collector. The "Midnight Sons" line up offers some great solo buys, so each new issue should help push all preceeding chapters. This is a good sign for *Spirits* #1 . The market seems ready for a Ghost Rider-Johnny Blaze team up. The return of Blaze and his newly formed alliance with Dan Ketch in *Ghost Rider* #13 and #14 (both are strong back issues) has already proven readership interest. With plans to create new characters and villians throughout the "Midnight Sons" and those titles' continuing issues, the potential for new interest is limited only by the creators' imaginations and ability to convey their ideas.

II. The creative team responsible for *Spirits of Vengeance* # 1 should prove beneficial to its short- and long-term collectable potential.

Writer Howard Mackie has been developing the storyline for the new *Ghost Rider* series since issue #1, so he has first hand knowledge of its direction and speed. This alone makes him a solid choice to successfully guide a new, second *Ghost Rider* title. Another of Mackie's strength is that he is a plotter, not a scripter (plotters tend to give pencilers more freedom with the art, whereas scripters usually give precise directions to the artist). This situation helps minimize any creative squabbling over a project, keeping the designers' minds free to concentrate on putting out quality work.

Penciler Adam Kubert hails from one of the more renowned comic book families working today. His father, Joe Kubert, has been an important artist in comics for decades, his best-known superhero work being the early revitalization of Hawkman in DC's *The Brave and the Bold* # 34. He also founded the Joe Kubert School of Comic Art. Brother Andy has done multiple projects as a free-lancer. He will be doing the phenomenal cover and interior art for *Ghost Rider* # 28, the first "Midnight Sons" issue, providing a firm platform from which *Spirits* #1 can launch. Adam Kubert most recently finished doing the inking for Andy's pencils on the tremendously successful *Batman vs. Predator* series. Adam, having been exposed to comic books his whole life, has emerged as a "do-it-all" type; he can pencil, ink, color, and letter. The Kubert style has been well-received by fans for decades, and all indications confirm that this will continue.

III. Similar situations in the past have proven to be successful collectable opportunies. A clear comparison can be drawn between *Spirits of Veangence* # 1 and *Punisher War Journal* # 1. Both are spin-offs from successful early start lines. Both were (are) released as the initial popularity of the parent titles began to decrease, raising questions as to whether there was (is) enough demand to support the new issues. Granted, *War Journal* sported Jim Lee art in the beginning, but at the time his popularity was nowhere near the level of today, yet #1 still produced significant early returns. Although preception was negative, reality proved positive.

A comparison can be made be made to *Punisher War Zone* #1 also, This second spin-off title arrived amidst much negative talk of there not being nearly enough demand to support three Punisher series. Lesson learned: Sometimes negative indicators act with reverse psychology, deterring speculators from holding large stock piles that, when they last, act to draw down the market price.

Spirits of Vengeance #1 probably will be ordered fairly heavily by wholesalers, retailers, and collectors, but certain negative indicators ought to temper this initial buying. First, the cover price of $2.75 is rather high. Second, Ghost Rider's popularity as at its lowest now, since the onset of the current series. This will lead larger collectors to question the true demand for a second Ghost Rider title. These negative indicators may have a successful reverse effect as explained above.

The first step toward wisdom is information (or so I have been told). From raw information, one must integrate his/her knowledge, striving for wisdom. Hopefully, through wisdom comes enlightenment in all its true glory

From The Wizard's Hat

PICKS

Here's a listing of the hottest books shipping in July!

Team Titans #1

Artist: Kevin Maguire
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Release Date: July 28th
Cover Price: $1.75

Hey, anybody remember back when the Titans were as hot as the X-Men? Well, it looks like DC is planning on returning the Titans to their former glory. The future Titans from last year's *Armageddon 2001* crossover, Terra, Mirage, Redwing, Nightrider and Kilowat form the team, and they're DC's answer to X-Force. Where the New Titans are more of your basic "good-guy" superhero team, Team Titans is a highly trained military strike force. In this premiere issue, the Team Titans face off against the New Titans in an attempt to assassinate Donna Troy before she can give birth to a child the Team Titans know will become the greatest evil the world has ever known. As an added bonus, *Team Titans* #1 will be shipped in five variations. Each issue will have the same 21-page feature story, but there will be a different 18-page origin story for each of the members of TT. This is also the third chapter in the nine-part "Total Chaos" storyline running through this title, *New Titans* and *Deathstroke, the Terminator*. *Team Titans* is not only a cool approach to the multiple #1 syndrome, but it's the kind of story that appeals to the majority of today's comic collectors: fast-paced and packed with action.

TEAM TITANS ™ & © 1992 DC Comics.

WildC.A.T.s #1

Artist: Jim Lee
Writer: Brandon Choi
Release Date: July
Cover Price: $1.95

Aarghh! We will never see Psylocke or Rogue in a skimpy bathing suit again? ...rats. Anyway, Jim Lee's newest project is *WildC.A.T.s,* the C.A.T.s standing for Covert Action Teams. The names of the people that will probably make comics history? Maul, Voodoo, Warblade, Spartan, Void, Grifter, Zealot, and led by...Emp. So they sound cool, but what do they do? Well, they're a team of superheroes who can't be topped when it comes to espionage, assaulting, defending and assassinating whomever and wherever they must, and they're caught in the middle of a battle among three alien races that hold the future of mankind in their hands. So which side are the good guys, and who do the C.A.T.s work for? Good questions. Read the series and find out (and hey...two free trading cards in this issue!).

Morbius #1

Artist: Ron Wagner
Writer: Len Kaminski
Release Date: July 21st
Cover Price: $2.75

Y'know, I've always liked this guy, even when he was running around trying to bite Spidey. But now, Morbius is a good guy and he beats the crap out of those who prey on the innocent. But he doesn't stop there, oh no. After he's slapped the bad guys around for a while, he puts the big kabosh on them with nifty Grandpa Munster teeth. But wait, there's more! In this awesome "Rise of the Midnight Sons" crossover, Morbius discovers that he's being followed by government agents in an attempt to learn his secrets, so they can attempt to cure him of his vampire condition, falls prey to Lilith and her demon horde. Each issue comes polybagged with a full-color fold-out poster! And who says the undead can't be fun?

WILDC.A.T.S ™ & © 1992 Jim Lee. MORBIUS ™ & © 1992 Marvel Entertainment Group

Brigade #1

Artist: Marat Mychaels
Writer: Hank Kanalz & Rob Liefeld
Release Date: July
Cover Price: $1.95

Ah, what do you do after you've created a superstar like Cable, turned a loser book like *New Mutants* into the super-hot *X-Force,* set a record for comic sales and have thoroughly buttoned your fly? Well, you go out and make more record-breaking comics and more super-hot characters and keep the copyrights! Yup, that wacky Rob "I was on Dennis Miller" Liefeld is back to kick some major butt with the release of *Brigade* #1, a *Youngblood* spin-off. Introduced to the ever-expanding Image Universe are Battlestone (ex-leader of Youngblood and current leader of Brigade), Kayo, Thermal, Coldsnap, Atlas, Stasis and Seahawk. This team is Image Universe's rebels, and needless to say they don't get along that great with the government. In addition to all this really cool stuff, each issue of *Brigade* will feature two Brigade trading cards inked by the likes of Todd McFarlane, Rob Liefeld, Whilce Portacio and Erik Larsen!

Spider-Man #26

Artist: Erik Larsen
Writer: Tom DeFalco
Release Date: July 21st
Cover Price: $3.50

Continuing Spidey's 30th anniversary spectacular, this issue features an out-of-this-world cover hologram (wow, *deja vu*) and a really nifty three part gatefold poster in the middle of the book. This story revolves around Spidey's origin as seen through the eyes of Peter Parker. And there's also a brand new supervillain who's ready to pulp Spidey into a red-and-blue smear. And for those of you unfamiliar with Spider-Man (the comic fans in Tibet, no doubt), the back-up story features Peter explaining to Mary Jane exactly how his powers work. Wonder if he's going to explain how he can stick to things through his costume, and why Aunt May isn't dead yet, and why Dr. Octopus looks like Roy Orbison. Hmm...truly a milestone issue.

BRIGADE ™ & © 1992 Rob Liefeld. SPIDER-MAN ™ & © 1992 Marvel Entertainment Group.

MORE PICKS

Action Comics Annual #4
DC Comics ***$2.50***
Darkness Within—Superman trades himself to eclipso for a whole town of people, and now the Justice League may have to kill him!

Adventures of Superman #494
DC Comics ***$1.25***
Superman's beliefs of right and wrong are shaken when he meets Kismet in Satanus's neutral realm.

Alpha Flight #112
Marvel ***$1.75***
The Master's Omega Flight and Magus battle for control of the Earth, with Gamma Flight trapped inbetween!

Adventures of Superman #494

Deathlok #15
Marvel ***$1.75***
The Biohazard Agenda (pt 4 of 4)—It's the final battle between Deatlok and Biohazard, as Deathlok reconciles with his wife and son.

Deathstroke The Terminator #14
DC Comics ***$1.75***
Total Chaos (pt 1 of 9)—Slade Wilson is hunted by Nightwing, who is determined to bring Deathstroke to justice!

Deathstroke The Terminator Annual #1
DC Comics ***$3.50***
Darkness Within—Deathstroke and Vigilante must fight an eclipsed Captain Hall while coming face to face with Nightwing!

Amazing Spider-Man #366

Amazing Spider-Man #366
Marvel ***$1.25***
Spider-Man's search for the truth about his parents leads him into a confrontation with the Red Skull!

Archer & Armstrong #3
Valiant ***$2.50***
Unity's over and Armstrong just wants a brew, but he's gonna have to fight a ninja nun to get one. Drawn by Windsor-Smith.

Avengers West Coast #86
Marvel ***$1.25***
The Avengers West try to rescue Spider-Woman from Deathweb's evil clutches.

The Demon #27
DC Comics ***$1.50***
America Rules! (pt 2 of 3)—Etrigan the Demon gains in popularity in his run for President of the United States! Guest starring Superman!

Eternal Warrior #3
Valiant ***$2.25***
It's time for Gilad and Armstrong to settle their 10,000 year-old score.

Ghost Rider #29
Marvel ***$1.75***
When innocent blood is spilled in Boston, Ghost Rider, Wolverine and the Beast team up to get some vengeance.

Daredevil #308

Captain America #406
Marvel ***$1.25***
Man and Wolf (pt 5 of 6)—A werewolf Captain America teams up with Wolverine, Wolfsbane, Feral, and Werewolf by Night.

Daredevil #308
Marvel ***$1.25***
Dead Man's Hand (pt 4 of 9)—The Punisher, Terror, Justin Hammer and Tombstone guest star as The Hand moves into town.

Darkhawk #19
Marvel ***$1.25***
This issue features the return of Portal and the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants! Can Darkhawk and Spider-Man stop them?

Deathlok #15

Harbinger #10
Valiant ***$2.50***
Introducing two new teammates: Shetiqua and Darryl, and their new enemies? The H.A.R.D. Corps. PSI-BORGS!!

Hawkworld Annual #3
DC Comics ***$2.95***
Darkness Within—When an eclisped Hawkwoman goes on a rampage in Chicago, can Hawkman stop her?

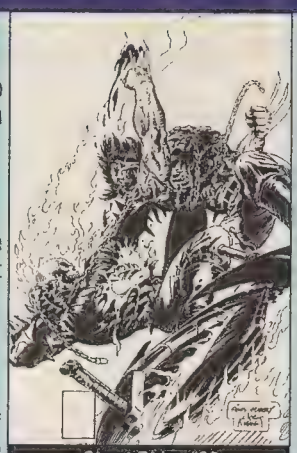
Infinity War #4
Marvel ***$2.50***
Warlock & the Watch are under attack by Marvel's superheroes in the dimensional corridor as Warlock tries to recreate to Infinity Gauntlet!! By Starlin & Lim.

MORE PICKS

Iron Man #284
Marvel ***$1.25***
Tony Stark is put in cryogenic freeze to try to save his life, and James Rhodes once again becomes Iron Man!

Justice League America #66
DC Comics ***$1.25***
The all-new Guy Gardner returns to rejoin the Leauge, as a mysterious visitor arrives at League Headquarters.

Justice League International Quarterly #8
DC Comics ***$3.50***
The League confronts a group of Doppelgangers with superior powers, and the secret of the new Conglomerate is revealed.

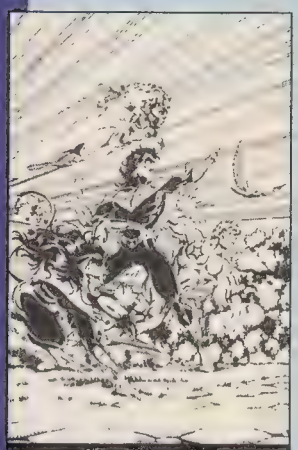

Ghost Rider #29

New Titans #90
DC Comics ***$1.75***
Total Chaos (pt 2 of 9)—The pregnant Troia is trapped in Star Labs while the Team Titans track her down!

New Titans Annual #8
DC Comics ***$3.50***
Darkness Within—If Nightwing can stay uneclipsed long enough, he must fight the controlled Deathstroke and Vigilante.

New Warriors #27
Marvel ***$1.25***
Speedball and Rage fight their evil duplicates in this Infinity War crossover.

Justice Society of America #1
DC Comics ***$1.25***
The world's first super-heroes are back, just in time to fight a group of meta-human terrorists!


New Titans #90

Legends of the Dark Knight #37
DC Comics ***$1.75***
Mercy is an ex-cop who's out for revenge for her partner's death, and Batman must enter "The Blood Pit" to stop her murder.

L.E.G.I.O.N. '92 #45
DC Comics ***$1.50***
Vril Dox and Hal Jordan try to keep order on Arga-Prime as Captain Comet's mind is taken over by an alien intelligence.

Next Men #6
Dark Horse ***$2.50***
This issue looks back at the origins of Project: Next Men and the beginnings of Senator Hilltop's schemes.

Nomad #5
Marvel ***$1.75***
Nomad and Bushwacker must team up to rescue the infant Bucky from the hands of...the Punisher?!

Punisher #70
Marvel ***$1.25***
Eurohit (pt 7 of 7)—The Punisher fights all of the Kingpin wannabe's in Central London. Will England survive this final showdown?

New Warriors #27

Lobo: Blazing Chains of Love #1
DC Comics ***$1.50***
Everything you ever wanted to know about the main man's sex life. Does the baddest bastich in the universe use condoms?

Magnus: Robot Fighter #17
Valiant ***$2.25***
After Unity's disaster and the fall of Japan, the world of 4001 is open to Talpa's attack. Is Magnus up to the fight?

Moon Knight #42
Marvel ***$1.75***
In this Infinity War crossover, Moonshade invades the multiverse to wipe out every Moon Knight in existance!

Spawn #3

Punisher War Zone #7
Marvel ***$1.75***
The Punisher reluctantly teams up with a female cop to find a rapist hiding out in Central Park.

Rai #8
Valiant ***$2.25***
The series ends with this issue, due to the death of Rai during Unity! #9 is coming this fall with an all new Spirit Guardian!

Robin Annual #1
DC Comics ***$2.50***
Darkness Within—Anarky falls under Eclipso's control, and it's up to Robin to stop him. Cover by Sam Kieth.

MORE PICKS

Robocop vs Terminator #3
Dark Horse ***$2.50***
After sending his own mind into Skynet's memory banks, Robocop plays hide-and-seek with the master computer. By Miller & Simonson.

Savage Dragon #2
Image ***$1.95***
The Dragon returns to fight the forces of evil, and the SuperPatriot returns! By Erik Larsen.

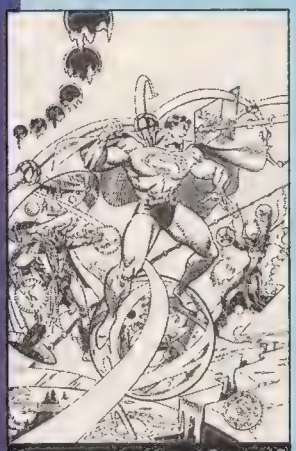
Shadowman #6
Valiant ***$2.50***
Relatives of the serial killer in the first issue return as Shadowman's girlfriend is stolen from him.

Superman #71

Superman, the Man of Steel #15
DC Comics ***$1.25***
The Blaze/Satanus War (pt 3 of 4)—Satanus takes Blaze to another realm, taking Superman, Lois and Jimmy along for the ride!

The Thing: Climate of Fear #1
Dark Horse ***$2.50***
MacReady awakens to find himself in an Argentinian military base. Can the alien be truly dead? No way!

Uncanny X-Men #292
Marvel ***$1.25***
Callisto and Mikhail make a fateful decision as the X-Men must face the Morlocks. Art by Whilce Portacio.


Superman: the Man of Steel #15

Silver Sable #4
Marvel ***$1.25***
Sable tries to take down Doctor Doom's evil duplicate in this Infinity War crossover.

Silver Surfer #71
Marvel ***$1.25***
The Surfer is defeated by Morg, Galactus's new herald. Can the Surfer and Firelord together stop him from terrorizing the galaxy?

Solar, Man of the Atom #14
Valiant ***$2.50***
Solar brings the new Geomancer to Earth as he's stalked by Zachariah Muldoon.

Warlock & The Infinity Watch #8
Marvel ***$1.75***
Thanos meets the Watch at the dimensional corridor. Will they team up against Magus or fight to the death?

Wolverine #60
Marvel ***$1.75***
Shiva returns, with Sabretooth as its new target! Which side will Wolverine be on?

X-Factor #82
Marvel ***$1.25***
When the government refuses the X-iles sanctuary from Genosha, X-Factor must reluctantly send them home.

The Thing: Climate of Fear #1

Spawn #3
Image ***$1.95***
More of Spawn's origin is revealed as he fights The Violator face to face. By Todd McFarlane.

Spirits of Vengeance #2
Marvel ***$1.75***
Steel Wind returns to attack Blaze and the Rider, until a mysterious force sends Ghost Rider into a coma!

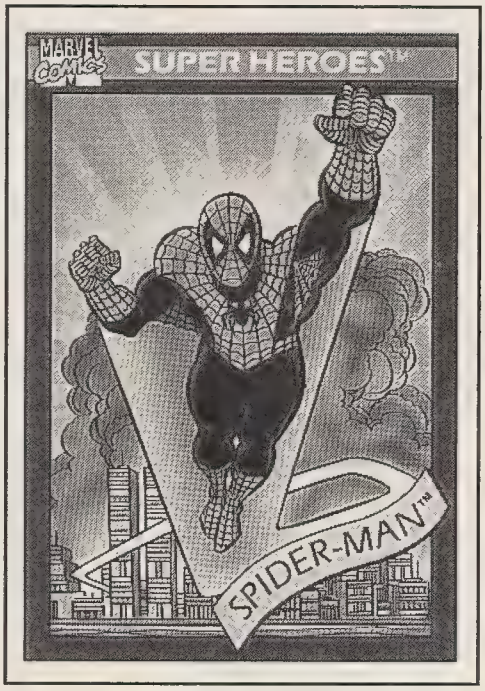
Superman #71
DC Comics ***$1.25***
The Blaze/Satanus War (pt 4 of 4)—The true identity of Satanus is revealed and Superman is trapped in the neutral realm!

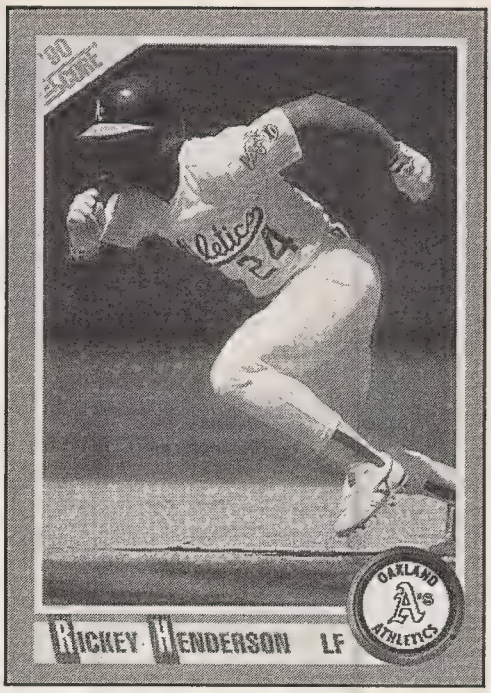
X-Men #12

X-Force #14
Marvel ***$1.25***
The Mutant Liberation Front attacks X-Force at their own headquarters!

X-Men #12
Marvel ***$1.25***
As the "Xavier files" unfold, an old menace links the lives of Charles Xavier and Wolverine. Art by Art Thibert.

X-O Manowar #9
Valiant ***$2.25***
Aric returns to his homeland: Italy 408 A.D.! His people are on the defensive, but the X-O Manowar armor may change that.





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TOP 100 JUNE-1992

Here's the list for June...the countdown of the top selling titles sold as reported by Diamond Comic Distributors, Inc.

1 Amazing Spider-Man #365
2 Spirits of Vengeance #1
3 X-Men #11
4 Spawn #2
5 Uncanny X-Men #291
6 X-Force #13
7 Ghost Rider #28
8 Savage Dragon #1
9 Infinity War #3
10 Spider-Man #25
11 Wolverine #58
12 Wolverine #59
13 Amazing Spider-Man Annual #26
14 X-Factor #81
15 Lobo's Back #4
16 Silver Surfer #69
17 Punisher War Zone #6
18 Incredible Hulk #396
19 Shadow of the Bat #3
20 Warlock & The Infinity Watch #7
21 Shadow of the Bat #4
22 Web of Spider-Man Annual #8
23 Spectacular Spider-Man Annual #12
24 Silver Sable #3
25 Avangers #350
26 Thor #450
27 Silver Surfer #70
28 Robocop vs Terminator #2
29 Punisher #68
30 Guardians of the Galaxy #27
31 Punisher #67
32 Daredevil #307
33 Marvel Comics Presents #109
34 Punisher Summer Special
35 Marvel Comics Presents #108
36 Fantastic Four #367
37 Legends of the Dark Knight #35
38 Nomad #4
39 New Warrriors #26
40 Legends of the Dark Knight #36
41 Batman Returns (Prestige Format)
42 Star Wars: Dark Empire #4
43 Batman #483
44 Captain America #405
45 Alien 3 Movie Adaption #1
46 Punisher War Journal #45
47 Web of Spider-Man #91
48 Spectacular Spider-Man #191
49 Captain America #404
50 Next Men #5
51 Cage #5
52 Excalibur #53
53 Darkhawk #18
54 Deathlok #14
55 Doctor Strange #44
56 Archer & Armstrong #2
57 Justice Society of America #1
58 Alpha Flight #111
59 Deathlok Annual #1
60 Detective Comics #648
61 Eternal Warrior #2
62 Detective Comics #648
63 Quasar #37
64 Magnus: Robot Fighter #16
65 X-O Manowar #8
66 Moon Knight #41
67 Solar, Man of the Atom #13
68 Avengers #351
69 Harbinger #9
70 Justice League America Annual #6
71 Superman Annual #9
72 Namor #29
73 Shadowman #5
74 Rai #7
75 Iron Man Annual #13
76 Run, Riddler, Run #3
77 Avengers West Coast Annual #7
78 Batman Returns (Newsstand Edition)
79 Avengers West Coast #85
80 What If? #40
81 Iron Man #283
82 Unity #1
83 Marvel 1992 Swimsuit Edition
84 Deathstroke the Terminator #13
85 Action Comics Annual #4
86 Aliens: Newt's Tale #2
87 Justice League America #65
88 Terror, Inc #2
89 Blood & Glory #2
90 Superman #70
91 Sandman #40
92 New Titans #89
93 Superman, Man of Steel #14
94 Justice League Europe #41
95 Green Lantern #27
96 Robocop 3 #1
97 Guy Gardner: Reborn #2
98 Flash Annual #5
99 Wonder Man #12
100 Adv. of Superman #493

Who's in the TOP 100?

	# books in top 10	# books in top 50	# books in top 100
Marvel	**8** (+1)	**37** (+3)	**57** (+0)
DC Comics	**-** (-2)	**7** (-3)	**26** (-2)
Valiant	**-** (+0)	**-** (-3)	**9** (+0)
Dark Horse	**-** (+0)	**4** (+2)	**6** (+1)
Image	**2** (+1)	**2** (+1)	**2** (+1)

GRAPHIC NOVELS & TPBs

1 Marvel Universe Master Edition #21
2 Star Trek: Debt of Honor
3 Tapping the Vein #5
4 Carl Barks Library Album #6
5 New Warriors TPB
6 Doom Patrol: Crawling Through/Wreckage
7 Taboo #6
8 Cosmic Odyssey TPB
9 Batman Collection #2
10 Eerie: Eternal Terrors TPB

Toying Around

With Brian Cunningham

Part III: Third time is the charm?

Return of the Jedi was the final chapter in arguably the greatest space trilogy of all time, and it tied up all of the loose plotlines started in the first two films. Originally titled ***Revenge** of the Jedi*, it was the highest grossing film in 1983, but regarded as the weakest of the trilogy. (Personally, I liked "revenge" in the title better--it gave it a vindictive flair.)

I remember standing on line, in the pouring rain, the first Sunday *Jedi* was released. This was strange to begin with because I usually saw a movie six months after it was released, and here I was on line the very first week-end of release! I suppose it was my father's fault, 'cause he really wanted to see a movie--any movie. *Jedi* won.

Don't get me wrong, though. *Jedi* might've been the "weakest," but that didn't mean, by any stretch, that it was a bad movie. Quite the opposite—it was spectacular! The effects, battles, and acting were all superb. Everything was bueno...except those blasted Ewoks! Those little critters bugged the heck out of me. Unlike the rest of the planet, I did not think they were "cute," just dumb.

Kenner released thirty-some-odd more figures and had a "sure thing" with *Return of the Jedi*. These figures sold well enough to continue selling them under a "Star Wars: The Power of the Force" label a long while after the *Jedi* figures were originally released.

These "Power of the Force" figures were released with special coins, which are kinda scarce. Also, Yak Face is quite scarce, since he was released only in Europe.

Well, this wraps up the *Star Wars* trilogy. Ninety-five percent of all the mail I have received clamored for this stuff, and I aim to please. Hopefully, if room permits in the price guide, I'll do a piece on *Star Trek* (which 90% of you want).

Many readers want to see more toy reviews, and I'll try to do more of that. After all, we've got *Batman Returns* figures, X-Men and X-Force figures, among others to look at. I'll also try to keep you updated on new stuff, as well as rumors in the toy community.

Pat McCallum and I have been talking and we're making big plans for "Toying Around" for the rest of the year. I think you'll like what we've got cooking. Starting next issue (hopefully), you'll see an interesting new part of this section, a new big-deal contest (you're gonna love it, trust me), and the "Name-Your-Letter-Column" winner will be revealed.

Lastly, Jim Salicrup once said his goal as editor of *Amazing Spider-Man* was to make it Marvel's best-selling title. He achieved that goal by pushing the right buttons with his readers. I want to do the same with "Toying Around" in this magazine, by making it the best there is. I need your help though. Tell me about it, okay?

Thanks for reading.

Toying Around Letters

The "Name-The-Letters-Column" contest is still on, folks. Write your suggestions to me via the Submissions Department, c/o Toying Around. O'tay? Now on to your letters...

Dear Brian:

This letter is in response to your column of May 1992. The reason there aren't more female action figures is really very clear: it is sexism. Of course boys play with action figures more than girls do! They are encouraged in this behavior, while girls—beginning at a very young age, when imaginations are blossoming—are pressured to stay within more "traditional" confines, ones that serve to reinforce women's second-class status and erode self-esteem.

The comics industry has been a boy's club for too long. Your article is further proof of that. You claim to be exploring the reasons behind the dearth of female action figures, but all you end up doing is justifying their absence. (By the way, I suspect you see so many Wonder Womans on the shelf because it is a poorly made figurine. Storm, on the other hand, seems quite popular, if what my friends buy is any indication.) To add insult to injury, you go on to say that female action figures are good for two things only: killing off and removing their clothing. In a world where violence against women is shockingly high, it is irresponsible of you to infer that women are useful only as recipients of male aggression. And you wonder why no females voted in your last poll? Why would they want to be a part of your discriminatory little fantasy world when it's already reality for them every day of their lives?

Girls are entitled to have their imagination nurtured, just as boys are. Girls are also entitled to have powerful, feminist role models. The comics industry is in a unique position to provide those role models. As an avid reader of comics, I am often disappointed but occasionally inspired. I hope to see more women creating their own comics, speaking with their own voice. I also hope you put more thought into your next commentary about women in comics and women in general; you have a lot to learn. Better yet, give the assignment to a woman.

Melissa Farrington
Arlington, MA

Melissa, I thank you for your comments. In reflection, what I wrote could have, and indeed did, get misinterpreted as my personal views towards women. Let me assure you that nothing quite so devious or serious was ever intended.

Your conclusion that sexism is the cause for the dearth of female action figures can best be answered by the toy companies and their planning staffs. I only comment on what is, not what should be.

As for my remarks "killing off and removing their clothing," I do apologize. I meant it to be taken humorously, but it was bad judgement and a very poor choice of words. As a relatively new column writer, I thank you for pointing out to me that once something is printed, it's too late to edit.

In closing, let me concur that we live in a world where violence against women is, unfortunately, a sick reality. I doubt whether the comic book or action figure industries can change that. I personally abhor it. These companies could promote more heroic females. But business being business, they would only do so if the demand and profit margin were apparent.

Top 10 most wanted action figures

1) Ghost Rider
2) Darkhawk
3) Lobo
4) Thanos
5) Adam Warlock
   Galactus (tie)
6) Nightwing
   Deathstroke (tie)
7) Nova,
   Beast (tie)
8) Rogue,
   Hawkeye (tie)
9) Psylock
10) Namor

With the Infinity War now out, it looks like you want Adam Warlock to get his own figure really soon. Send in your Top 10 today!

Create Your Own Figure Dept.

BETA-RAY THOR

This figure comes from Marcus Carpentiere of Bronx, NY. Would you believe that's a Toy Biz Venom under there? Send me a picture of your own figure, and I'll show it here!

TOP 10 JULY 1992

We keep a very close watch on all the hottest books trading hands throughout the country. Here we have listed for you the 10 most commonly sold and demanded comics.

Harbinger #1

Artist: Dave Lapham
Writer: Jim Shooter

Can you say "oven mitt?" That's what you're going to need if you want to pick up this baby. Y'see, for four months, *Uncanny X-Men* #201 dominated the top of the charts and nothing or nobody could shove that giant off it's perch. Heavy hitters like *New Mutants* #87, *Uncanny X-Men* #248 and *Amazing Spider-Man* #361 all tried, but they all got shot down. So how did *Harbinger* do what all the "big boys" couldn't? Well, I guess it must have something to do with the content of the book. Instead of buying this book for holograms, gatefolds or whatever, it's purchased based on the quality of the writing and art. People want it because it's good. What makes it so hot that it can top the charts is its ridiculously low print run. In an age where it seems commonplace for a book to sell a million copies, *Harbinger* clocked in at under 40,000 copies. And how many of those had their redeemable coupons cut out? Definitely a choice book.

Magnus #0 (send-away version)

Artist: Paris Cullins
Writer: Jim Shooter

Whoa! Geez, I guess people are finally beginning to notice just how good Valiant really is. Not content with wresting control of the #1 spot, the mighty fellas from the big V have struck again. This time around it's the mighty *Magnus* #0, which has a super limited print run and includes the special Barry Windsor-Smith card, unlike the *Magnus* #0's that were sent to the stores. The only way to get this little bugger was to chop up copies of *Magnus* #1 through #8 and send in the coupons found in each. Needless to say, people weren't too quick to slice and dice their copies, and that's why the hefty price tag on this book. Hmm...maybe we'll see more Magnus in the top ten in the coming months.

Spectacular Spider-Man #189

Artist: Sal Buscema
Writer: J. M. DeMatteis

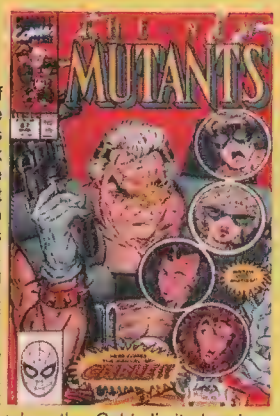
Hey, another Valiant in the Top 10! This one's about...oh wait. This is a Marvel. My mistake. Anyway, moving up four notches from last month's position is the first in a series of four hologram-covered anniversary issues for the web-head. This book sold out before it hit the stores, and it sure didn't take long for it to jump above the $2.95 cover price. With the amount of excitement surrounding Spidey's 30th anniversary, expect this book to do even better, and possibly push even higher into the hot charts.

Uncanny X-Men #201

Artist: Rick Leonardi
Writer: Chris Claremont

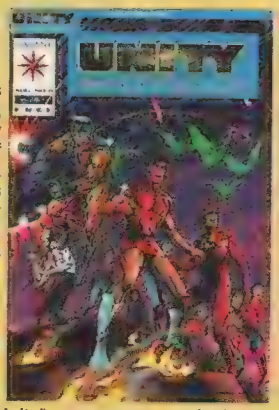
Still soaking it's butt in hot water after being kicked out of the #1 spot, *Uncanny* #201 has fallen big time from its prestigious spot. After holding the all-time record by lasting four months in the top notch, the rumored first appearance of Cable has lost a lot of steam with the fans. The rumor was that Nathan Summers, the son of Scott and Madelyne Summers, is actually baby Cable, making this one monster-hot book. If this book gets a new shot of popularity when the new Cable mini series comes out remains to be seen.

5 New Mutants #87



Artist: Rob Liefeld
Writer: Louise Simonson
After being in the top two spots of the Top Ten for seven months, the legit first appearance of Cable has really hit the skids. Now don't freak out, it's not like the book's a piece of crap now or anything, it's just that after a year of being a top contender, a lot of comic fans bought up the book and moved on. The fact that it even lasted so long in the top two positions is just a testament to the fan following of Rob "Did I say three-issue mini-series?" Liefeld and the popularity of that wacky leader of X-Force, Cable. And what we said about *Uncanny X-Men* #201's popularity when the *Cable* limited-series comes out holds true here as well.

6 Unity #0

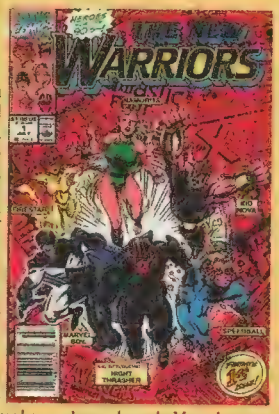


Artist: Barry Windsor Smith
Writer: Jim Shooter
Valiant scores a hat trick this month in the charts with *Unity* #0, the prelude to the entire Unity crossover running through all of their titles. What makes this such a cool book is that those nutty guys over at Valiant gave *Unity* #0 away free, based upon what stores ordered on the first eight chapters of the series. The print run on this little baby is rumored to be somewhere around 250,000, which is not high by any company's standards, but sets a new record for Valiant. This book is hot, no question, but its print run was double that of any of the other "Unity" crossovers, so don't let anybody tell you that it's rare. Thin, but not rare.

7 Uncanny X-Men #266

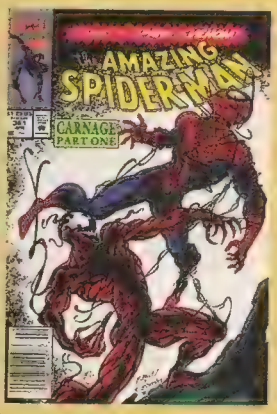
Artist: Mike Collins
Writer: Chris Claremont
Did all the X-books slip in the charts this month? Might have something to do with all the creative teams either getting fired or quitting. Anyway, this, the first appearance of Gambit, the cajun charmer that has the hots for fellow X-Man Rogue, slips all the way from the #3 slot down here to lucky number seven. As this book yo-yos up and down the charts, everyone waits with baited breath to see if Gambit is the traitor X-Man that dooms the team, as revealed by fellow member and part-time time-traveller Bishop. When that storyline finally comes to pass, and if Gambit does play a pivotal role, expect this book to take the freight train back up to the top.

8 New Warriors #1



Artist: Mark Bagley
Writer: Fabian Nicieza
Returning to the top ten after a weak start in *Wizard* #2, the still under-rated *New Warriors* makes a triumphant return. When these guys first showed up in the pages of *Thor*, they were shown as the biggest bunch of geek losers. Not until they got their own title did the fans really take notice of how cool they really were. The entire team consists of teenagers or young adults, and the fans can really relate to their personal lives as well as thrill to their adventures. Also, considering that this book came out 'bout the same time as *Spider-Man* #1, it was probably monstrously underordered. You know what that means.

9 Amazing Spider-Man #361



Artist: Mark Bagley
Writer: David Michelinie
Moving down a batch of notches (hmm...sounds like a Mexican appetizer) from its position last month is the first chapter of "Venom-Spawn" featuring Venom's bouncing baby boy, Carnage! And hey, Venom's in it too! The main villain, Carnage, has become an overnight fan favorite, which is sortof scary. All the kids love this ruthless, cold-blooded serial killer and they can't get enough of his, well, for lack of a better word, carnage. Let's hope no little kids want to grow up to be just like him. And in case you're worried about Carnage's "death" in *Spidey* #363 hurting his popularity, c'mon. If Carnage is really dead, I'm Ronald McDonald.

10 Amazing Spider-Man #274

Artist: Ron Frenz
Writer: Tom DeFalco
We knew we had a hot ticket when we covered this little tike in the Comic Watch in issue #10, but it caught fire a lot sooner than anyone expected. Why's it so hot? Simple-- Ghost Rider! Yep. That pesky little flame-headed Spirit of Vengeance makes a previously unknown appearance in these pages. But this is the *original* Ghost Rider we're talking about. Y'know, the one who used to possess Johnny Blaze? In this issue, he escapes from the crystal in which he was imprisoned at the end of *Ghost Rider* #81, and in his full demonic form, he beats the crapola out of Spider-Man!

WIZARD MARKET WATCH

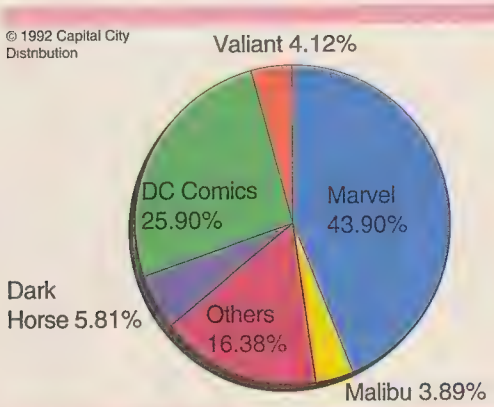
★ "V is for Valiant, and that's good enough for me ..." and for everybody else as well. Just about every issue of a Valiant title has gone up, and in some cases, gone up *drastically.* It appears that the Unity crossover series that just ran through their titles did what it was supposed to do: put Valiant on everyone's mind and their name on everybody's lips. The titles with the largest increases include *Solar, Magnus* and *Harbinger.* And for those of you who can't afford the hefty price tags attached to those big boys, check out back issues of *Archer & Armstrong, Eternal Warrior,* and *X-O Manowar* while their prices are still affordable. But don't wait too long.

★ Another hot title is *Next Men* from Dark Horse comics. Straight from the super-creative mind of John Byrne comes this series about super powered beings who escape from the top-secret government complex that berthed them. It's all done pretty realistically and is one of the better books on the market today. Also check out *Dark Horse Presents* #54 for the Next Men's first appearance, which is soon to be reprinted in color in the pages of *Next Men* #0.

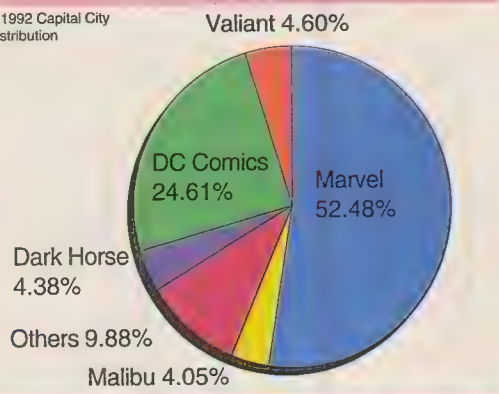
★ Image Press has really shot like a rocket through the comic world. With the release of the first issues of *Youngblood, Spawn* and *WildC.A.T.s,* Image has shattered every sales record for a non DC/Marvel book. But do they have the right stuff to have a lasting effect on the comic world? Well, Image started off on a shaky leg when its debut title, *Youngblood,* was released only after a heavy delay, and subsequent issues were delayed as well. This, combined with the fact that *Youngblood* sets will be sold at convenience stores after the series completion for either cover or at a discounted rate has kept the collector weary. Aside from that, *Spawn* has been received with open arms and *WildC.A.T.s, Savage Dragon, Shadowhawk, Cyberforce, Brigade* and *Wetworks* are all heavily anticipated.

★ The hype and hysteria surrounding the release of Alien³ has dissipated. The movie has nowhere near the impact of the first two, and fans aren't going crazy over those lil' acid-blooded buggers or their comics. Expect prices to hold on the Alien books, but not to increase any huge amount soon. A title that is experiencing a hot spell is the *Aliens vs. Predator* mini-series (12 issues) that's due out later this year and will be written by ex-X-Man scribe, Chris Claremont. Cool stuff from Dark Horse.

★ Hmmm, with all these small comic companies experiencing such success, how is it affecting the status of Marvel and DC Comics? Simple. It's eating away at DC's market share. If you'll watch the pie charts in this section that represent market shares and dollar shares during the upcoming months, you'll notice that DC is slowly but surely slipping lower and lower in the charts. When we said several issues ago that DC is in danger of slipping off its #2 position of most powerful publisher, a lot of people scoffed. Now it's no longer a prediction, with Image Press steamrolling its way to the top, DC can easily be pushed to the #3 spot. Even there, companies like Valiant and Dark Horse are hungry to climb higher in the charts. How is this happening? DC is the oldest company around, and they have one of the largest stables of characters in existence. What are they doing wrong? DC seems outdated. They may spend more time making their characters real and paying attention to continuity, but they seem to neglect what the fans are pleading for. Instead of doing a fourth monthly *Batman* book or resurrect The Outsiders, how about a Lobo monthly book? Or even bimonthly? Just a succession of mini-series is not productive. How about a



Dollar Share of the Comic Book Market for May according to Capital City Distribution



Piece Share of the Comic Book Market for May according to Capital City Distribution

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS

1. TODD McFARLANE
Spawn

2. JIM LEE
WildC.A.T.s

3. ROB LIEFELD
Youngblood

4. WHILCE PORTACIO
Uncanny X-Men,
upcoming: *Wetworks*

5. RON LIM
Infinity War

6. MARK BAGLEY
Amazing Spider-Man,

7. ERIK LARSEN
Savage Dragon

8. JOHN BYRNE
Next Men, She-Hulk

9. MIKE ZECK
Spider-Man:
Soul of the Hunter

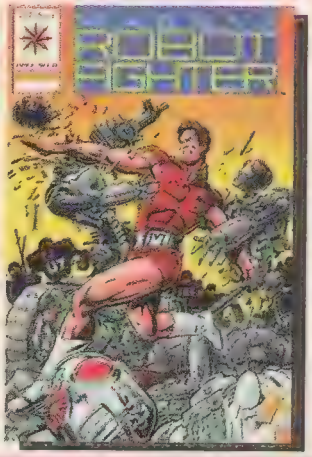
10. ART THIBERT
X-Men,
uncoming: *Nightwing*

Robin series? Or just improve the titles that already exist? Build upon the continuity on the Batman line of titles. Explore his supporting cast just a tad more. Get the New Titans on a solid schedule. Hype up *L.E.G.I.O.N. '92*, a good book and Lobo is a member who appears almost every month. Advertise titles like *Sandman*, *Shade*, *Animal Man*, *Black Condor*, and *Swamp Thing* outside of comics to appeal to the audience that could appreciate them. And sales gimmicks... c'mon! That entire Robin II hologram/collectors set/limited edition thing fell below expectations. What was done with *Team Titans* #1 (multiple covers, different interiors) was a definite step in the right direction. But is it too late? If DC Comics, who have the most recognizable comic characters in the world, is sliding down the charts *permanently*, only time will tell.

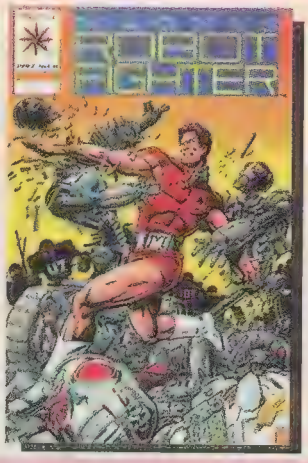
★ So where is Marvel in all this? Where they've been for quite some time and where they'll be for the foreseeable future, on top of the world. Even with the departure of the big name artists for Image Press rocking the boat a little, the house that Stan Lee built is still on a real solid foundation. Sales on their regular mainstays (X-Men, Spidey, Punisher, etc.) are still super high on the charts, and a new crop of hot artists (Mark Bagley, Ron Lim, Sam Kieth) and up and comers Joe Quesada, Jae Lee and Liam Sharp seem prepared to keep Marvel king of the hill. Amid all this "Hotness", a few of Marvel's old mainstays appear to have gotten the shaft. Titles which helped make Marvel what it is today, have really been hitting the skids as of late. *Iron Man*, *The Fantastic Four*, *Thor*--all oldies, have been far from goodies. Here's hoping that some attention is shown to these important titles. As for Marvel back issues, as a whole they're doing nicely, but two major books have dropped in attention since last issue. *New Mutants* #87, the first appearance of Cable and *Uncanny X-Men* #201, the rumored first appearance of the Cable baby, have both lost some fan following. This could be attributed to the tremendous fan focus on Image Press right now, or the sudden surge for Valiant back issues taking up all of the collectors' money. Some hot books from the Marvel backlist include just about any comic in which Morbius the Living Vampire appeared, especially his first appearance in *Amazing Spidey* #101. Other hot back issues from Marvel Include the hologram covered issues of Spidey's 30th anniversary comics, *New Warriors* and *Punisher War Zone.*

THIS MONTH'S BIGGEST MOVERS

Harbinger #1
from $12.00 to $32.00



Magnus #0 (send-away version)
from $32.00 to $65.00



Magnus #0 (in-store version)
from $2.50 to $50.00

SHOWS AND CONVENTIONS

ALABAMA

JUL 25 AL, HUNTSVILLE, Collector's Expo, Marriott Inn by the Space Center, 5 Tranquility Dr. T:20 F:$40 A:$1 10am-4pm, Dana Pinkard 404-234-8210

CALIFORNIA

JUL 1 CA, WALNUT, Baseball Card/Pins/Comics Show, Frank and Son Warehouse, 19465 East Walnut Dr North. T:100 F:$25 A:free 5pm-9:30pm, Frank Zamarripa 714-594-7492

JUL 3-5 CA, OAKLAND, First Annual Fourth of July Comic Con, Scottish Rite Center, 1547 Lakeside Dr. T:$195(after6/15= $225) 12pm-7pm(Fri)10am-7pm(Sat)11am-6pm(Sun), Dan or Carolyn 510-625-6975

JUL 4 CA, WALNUT, Baseball Card/Pins/Comics Show, Frank and Son Warehouse, 19465 East Walnut Dr North. T:100 F:$35 A:free 10am-5pm, Frank Zamarripa 714-594-7492

JUL 8 CA, WALNUT, Baseball Card/Pins/Comics Show, Frank and Son Warehouse, 19465 East Walnut Dr North. T:100 F:$25 A:free 5pm-9:30pm, Frank Zamarripa 714-594-7492

JUL 11 CA, WALNUT, Baseball Card/Pins/Comics Show, Frank and Son Warehouse, 19465 East Walnut Dr North. T:100 F:$35 A:free 10am-5pm, Frank Zamarripa 714-594-7492

JUL 12 CA, SAN DIEGO, Super-Con, Scottish Rite Center, 1895 Camino Del Rio So. A:$3.50(under5free) 10am-5pm, Supercon 916-929-3924

JUL 15 CA, WALNUT, Baseball Card/Pins/Comics Show, Frank and Son Warehouse, 19465 East Walnut Dr North. T:100 F:$25 A:free 5pm-9:30pm, Frank Zamarripa 714-594-7492

JUL 18 CA, WALNUT, Baseball Card/Pins/Comics Show, Frank and Son Warehouse, 19465 East Walnut Dr North. T:100 F:$35 A:free 10am-5pm, Frank Zamarripa 714-594-7492

JUL 22 CA, WALNUT, Baseball Card/Pins/Comics Show, Frank and Son Warehouse, 19465 East Walnut Dr North. T:100 F:$25 A:free 5pm-9:30pm, Frank Zamarripa 714-594-7492

JUL 25 CA, WALNUT, Baseball Card/Pins/Comics Show, Frank and Son Warehouse, 19465 East Walnut Dr North. T:100 F:$35 A:free 10am-5pm, Frank Zamarripa 714-594-7492

JUL 25-26 CA, WEST COVINA, A Mall Comic Book Show, Eastland Shopping Center, 2648 E. Workman Ave. T:100 F:$100 A:free 10am-6pm(Sat)11am-5pm(Sun), Derek Borthwick 818-913-4046

JUL 26 CA, AZUSA, Baseball Card and Comic Book Show, Azusa Elks Lodge, 521 N. Virginia. T:40 F:$35 A:$.50 10am-5pm

JUL 26 CA, GLENDALE, South California Comic Book & Sports Card & Collectable Convention, Glendale Civic Auditorium, 1401 N. Verdugo Rd. T:90 F:$50(sports) $40(non-sports) A:$2.50(under6 free) 10am-4pm, Dean Chen 818-842-1861

JUL 29 CA, WALNUT, Baseball Card/Pins/Comics Show, Frank and Son Warehouse, 19465 East Walnut Dr North. T:100 F:$25 A:free 5pm-9:30pm, Frank Zamarripa 714-594-7492

AUG 1 CA, WALNUT, Baseball Card/Pins/Comics Show, Frank and Son Warehouse, 19465 East Walnut Dr North. T:100 F:$35 A:free 10am-5pm, Frank Zamarripa 714-594-7492

AUG 5 CA, WALNUT, Baseball Card/Pins/Comics Show, Frank and Son Warehouse, 19465 East Walnut Dr North. T:100 F:$25 A:free 5pm-9:30pm, Frank Zamarripa 714-594-7492

AUG 8 CA, WALNUT, Baseball Card/Pins/Comics Show, Frank and Son Warehouse, 19465 East Walnut Dr North. T:100 F:$35 A:free 10am-5pm, Frank Zamarripa 714-594-7492

AUG 12 CA, WALNUT, Baseball Card/Pins/Comics Show, Frank and Son Warehouse, 19465 East Walnut Dr North. T:100 F:$25 A:free 5pm-9:30pm, Frank Zamarripa 714-594-7492

AUG 15 CA, WALNUT, Baseball Card/Pins/Comics Show, Frank and Son Warehouse, 19465 East Walnut Dr North. T:100 F:$35 A:free 10am-5pm, Frank Zamarripa 714-594-7492

CONNECTICUT

JUL 5 CT, WEST HARTFORD, 1st Ever West Hartford Comic Book Convention, American Legion Hall, 18 Memorial Rd. T:30 F:$30,2@$55 A:$1 10am-5pm, Daniel Vince 203-523-8920

JUL 11 CT, NORWALK, $250 Give-Away Sports Card & Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn, 789 Connecticut Ave. T:40 F:$50 A:$2 9:30am-3:30pm, Bruce Weinstein 908-821-1019

JUL 11 CT, WATERBUTY, Comic Book & Sports Card Show, Red Bull Inn, T:50 F:6ft-$35,2@$65 8ft-$40,2@$75 A:$1 9am-5pm, Eric Schuell 203-573-8899

JUL 12 CT, WINDSOR LOCKS, Comic Book Convention, Holiday Inn, 16 Ella T Grasso Tpk. T:25 F:$30, Mike Wimbish 203-242-1189

JUL 18 CT, STAMFORD, $250 Give-Away Sportscard & Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn, 700 Main St. T:40 F:$50 A:$2 10am-4pm, Bruce Weinstein 908-821-1019

JUL 19 CT, MIDDLEBURY, Sportscard Comics Racing & Nonsport Collectable Show, Post University Drubner Center. T:60 F:$50 A:$2(under10 $.99) 10am-4pm, Donald Ellis 203-746-7531

AUG 2 CT, STAMFORD, Sports-card Comics Racing & Nonsport Collectables Show, Stamford Marriott, 2 Stamford Forum. T:50 F:$55 A:$2(under10 $.99) 10am-4pm, Donald Ellis 203-746-7531

FLORIDA

JUL 18 FL, BOCA RATON, $250 Give-Away Sportscard & Comic Book Show, Embassy Suites, 661 NW 53rd St. T:40 F:$50 A:$2 10am-4pm, Bruce Weinstein 908-821-1019

JUL 19 FL, PLANTATION/FT. LAUDERDALE, $250 Give-Away Sports Card & Comic Book Show, Sheraton Suites, 311 North University Dr. T:40 F:$50 A:$2 10am-4pm, Bruce Weinstein 908-821-1019

AUG 16 FL, PLANTATION/FT. LAUDERDALE, $250 Give-Away Sports Card & Comic Book Show, Sheraton Suites, 311 North University Dr. T:40 F:$50 A:$2 10am-4pm, Bruce Weinstein 908-821-1019

GEORGIA

JUL 10-12 GA, ROME, Collector's Expo Comic Book Show, Riverbend Mall, Tunder-McCall Blvd. F:$40 A:free Mall Hours, Dana Pinkard 404-234-8210

AUG 7-9 GA, GAINESVILLE, Collector's Expo Collectibles Show, Lakeshore Mall, Washington St. F:$50 A:free Mall Hours, Dana Pinkard 404-234-8210

ILLINOIS

JUL 12 IL, CRYSTAL LAKE, Non-Smoking Sports Card & Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn, RT 31 & Three Oaks Rd. F:$35 A:$1 10am-3pm, Louis Pinsky 708-567-9543

JUL 12 IL, ROSEMONT, America's Largest 1 Day Comic & Card Show, Horizon Skyline Room, 6920 N. Mannheim Rd. T:150 F:$45 A:$2 10am-4pm, Midwest Shows, 708-498-8090

JUL 25 IL, ROSEMONT, America's Largest 1 Day Comic & Card Show, Horizon Skyline Room, 6920 N. Mannheim Rd. T:150 F:$45 A:$2 10am-4pm, Midwest Shows, 708-498-8090

JUL 26 IL, CHICAGO, Comic Book Show, Ford City Holiday Inn, 7353 S. Cicero Ave. T:50 F:$35 A:$1 10am-4pm, Midwest Shows 708-496-8090

AUG 1-2 IL, CHICAGO, Comic Book Show, Brickyard Shopping Center, Diversey & Austin. T:100 F:$75 Mall Hours, Midwest Shows 708-496-8090

AUG 2 IL, ROSEMONT, America's Largest 1 Day Comic & Card Show, Horizon Skyline Room, 6920 N. Mannheim Rd. T:150 F:$45 A:$2 10am-4pm, Midwest Shows, 708-498-8090

AUG 9 IL, CRYSTAL LAKE, Non-Smoking Sports Card & Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn, RT 31 & Three Oaks Rd. F:$35 A:$1 10am-3pm, Louis Pinsky 708-567-9543

AUG 9 IL, ELMWOOD PARK, Ray's Mini Video Comic Book & Sportscard Show, Elmwood Park Civic Center, 2 Conti Pkwy. T:25-50 F:$35 A:$1 9am-5pm, Ray's Mini Video 708-452-6214

AUG 9 IL, ROCKFORD, Northern Illinois Summer Comic Show, Ramada Inn, 7550 E. State St. Hotstuff Comics 815-227-XMEN

INDIANA

JUL 5 IN, MERRILLVILLE, Merrillville's Monthly Card and Comic Show, Slovak Club, 6920

SHOWS AND CONVENTIONS

Broadway. T:20 F:$25 A:$1 10am-4pm, Marilyn Hall 219-663-8561

JUL 12 IN, CROWN POINT, Crown Point's Monthly Card and Comic Show, American Legion, 1410 North Main. T:20 F:$25 A:$1 10am-4pm, Marilyn Hall 219-663-8561

JUL 25 IN, HIGHLAND, Highland's Monthly Card and Comic Show, Lincoln Center, 2450 Lincoln Street. T:20 F:$20 A:$1 6pm-10pm, Marilyn Hall 219-663-8561

AUG 2 IN, MERRILLVILLE, Merrillville's Monthly Card and Comic Show, Slovak Club, 6920 Broadway. T:20 F:$25 A:$1 10am-4pm, Marilyn Hall 219-663-8561

IOWA

JUL 11-12 IA, JOHNSTON, Baseball Cards & Comics & More Show, Village Square Mall, 5800 Merle Hay Rd. T:40 F:$100 10am-5pm(Sat)12pm-3pm(Sun), Stacey Craig 515-673-4087

JUL 18-19 IA, OSKALOOSA, Baseball Cards & Comics & More Show, Penn Central Mall, Hwy 92 West. T:35 F:$30,2@$50 Mall Hours, Stacey Craig 515-673-4087

AUG 15-16 IA, OTTUMWA, Baseball Cards & Comics & More Show, Quincy Place Mall, Highway 34 west. T:35 F:$40,2@$75 Mall Hours, Stacey Craig 515-673-4087

MARYLAND

JUL 4 MD, HAGERSTOWN, Reality Comic Books Convention, Ramada, 910 Daul Hwy (rt40). F:$50 A:$3 10am-4pm, Reality Conventions 301-791-8159

JUL 5 MD, BEL AIR, H and M Comics and Sports Card Show, American Legion Post #39. T:45 F:$30(6ft)$40(8ft) A:$1 10am-5pm, Dan 410-838-4339 or Mike 410-879-5316

JUL 5 MD, SILVER SPRING, Reality Comic Book Convention, Armory Place, 925 Wayne Ave. F:$50 A:$3 10am-4pm, Reality Conventions 301-791-8159

AUG 2 MD, BALTIMORE, Reality Comic Book Convention, Sheraton, Elm Rd at BWI Airport. F:$50 A:$3 10am-4pm, Reality Conventions 301-791-8159

MASSACHUSETTS

JUL 16-19 MA, CHICOPEE, Comic Book show, Fairfield Mall. A:free Mall Hours, Bill Gouvalaris 617-289-8662

JUL 23-26 MA, LEOMINSTER, Comic Book Show, Searstown Mall. A:free Mall Hours, Bill Gouvalaris 617-289-8662

JUL 30-AUG 2 MA, SPRINGFIELD, Comic Book Show, Eastfield Mall, 1655 Boston Rd. A:free Mall Hours, Bill Gouvalaris 617-289-8662

AUG 6-9 MA, DEDHAM, Comic Book Show, Dedham Mall. A:free Mall Hours, 617-289-8662

AUG 13-16 MA, WATERTOWN, Comic Book Show, Watertown Mall, 550 Arsenal St. A:free Mall Hours, Bill Gouvalaris 617-289-8662

MICHIGAN

JUL 11 MI, WHITE LAKE, Cards & Comics Shows, Great American Diner, 9531 Highland Rd. T:20 F:$25 A:free 10am-4pm, Tim Nichols 1-313-623-1299

JUL 12 MI, ROYAL OAK, Encore-Con Comic Book and Baseball Card Show, American Legion Hall, 1815 Rochester Rd. F:$35 A:$1.50 10am-4pm, Michael Goldman 313-350-2633

JUL 12 MI, WALLED LAKE, Card & Comic Show, Chucker's Hall, 1172 North Pontiac Trail. T:40 F:$25 A:$1 10am-4pm, Tim 313-632-1299

JUL 14 MI, ROYAL OAK, Encore-Con Comic Book and Baseball Card Show, American Legion Hall, 1815 Rochester Rd. F:$35 A:$1.50 10am-4pm, Michael Goldman 313-350-2633

JUL 19 MI, CLAWSON, Clawson Comic And Card Convention, Knights of Columbus, 870 N. Main. T:40 F:$25 A:$1 10am-4pm, John Green 313-779-1207

JUL 25 MI, WHITE LAKE, Cards & Comics Shows, Great American Diner, 9531 Highland Rd. T:20 F:$25 A:free 10am-4pm, Tim Nichols 1-313-623-1299

JUL 26 MI, LIVONIA, X-Travaganza Con Comic Book Show, Knights of Columbus Hall, 19801 Farmington Rd. F:$35 A:$1.50 10am-4pm, Michael Goldman 313-350-2633

JUL 26 MI, WALLED LAKE, Card & Comic Show, Chucker's Hall, 1172 North Pontiac Trail. T:40 F:$25 A:$1 10am-4pm, Tim 313-632-1299

AUG 8 MI, WHITE LAKE, Cards & Comics Shows, Great American Diner, 9531 Highland Rd. T:20 F:$25 A:free 10am-4pm, Tim Nichols 1-313-623-1299

AUG 9 MI, ROYAL OAK, Encore-Con Comic Book and Baseball Card Show, American Legion Hall, 1815 Rochester Rd. F:$35 A:$1.50 10am-4pm, Michael Goldman 313-350-2633

AUG 9 MI, WALLED LAKE, Card & Comic Show, Chucker's Hall, 1172 North Pontiac Trail. T:40 F:$25 A:$1 10am-4pm, Tim 313-632-1299

MINNESOTTA

AUG 8 MN, BLOOMINGTON, Baseball Cards & Comics & More Show, Thunderbird Motel, I-494 & 24th Ave South. T:40 F:$40,2@$75 A:$1 10am-4pm, Stacey Craig 515-673-4087

AUG 9 MN, BLOOMINGTON, Baseball Cards & Comics & More Show, Comfort Inn, I-494 & Portland 12th Ave exit. T:40 F:$40,2@$75 A:$1 10am-4pm, Stacey Craig 515-673-4087

AUG 9 MN, BRAINERD, Baseball and Comic show, Holiday Inn, Hwy 371 S. T:25 F:$35 9am-4:30pm, Kevin Bergson 701-235-2562

NEW JERSEY

JUL 5 NJ, TINTON FALLS, Monmouth County Comic Book Collector's Spectacular, Holiday Inn, 700 Hope Rd. T:45 F:$45 A:$2 9:30am-5pm, Robert Jerdo Jr 908-341-8981

JUL 5 NJ, TINTON FALLS, Monmouth County Comic Book and Trading Card Convention, Holiday Inn, Pkwy exit 105. T:40 F:$40 A:$2 10am-5pm, Ruth Campbell 908-269-9486

JUL 8 NJ, BRIDGEWATER, Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn, Rt 22 East. T:25 F:$40 A:$1.50 10am-4pm, Bruce Weinstein 908-821-1019

JUL 10 NJ, EAST BRUNSWICK, Sports N Stuff, 10 Alvin Ct. T:32 F:$50 A:$2 10am-4pm, Bruce Weinstein 908-821-1019

JUL 12 NJ, PRINCETON, $500 Give-Away Sportscard & Comic Book Show, Ramada Inn, Rt 1 and Ridge Rd. T:40 F:$50 A:$2 10am-4pm, Bruce Weinstein 908-821-1019

JUL 12 NJ, WOODBRIDGE, Reality Comic Bood Convention, Sheraton, 515 Rt 1 South. F:$50 A:$3 10am-4pm, Reality Conventions 301-791-8159

JUL 16 NJ, PRINCETON, $100 Give-Away Sportscard & Comic Book Show, Ramada Inn, Rt 1 and Ridge Rd. T:25 F:$45 A:$1.50 6pm-10pm, Bruce Weinstein 908-821-1019

JUL 18 NJ, SEASIDE HEIGHTS, Jersey Shore Comic Book and Trading Card Convention, American Legion Post #351, Carteret Ave at Bay Blvd. T:40 F:$40 A:$2 10am-5pm, Ruth Campbell 908-269-9486

JUL 19 NJ, ROBBINSVILLE, Central New Jersey Comic Book & Baseball Card Show, Washington Twp. Volunteer Fire Dept. A:$2 9:30am-3:30pm, EMCEE Conventions 609-448-7585

JUL 25 NJ, HIGHTSTOWN/EAST WINDSOR, $250 Giveaway Sportscard & Comic Book Show, 399 Monmouth St. T:50 F:$50-$60 A:$2 10am-4pm, Bruce Weinstein 908-821-1019

JUL 26 NJ, MATAWAN, Comic Book Show, Temple Beth Am, 550 Lloyd Rd. T:40 F:$40 A:$2 10am-4pm, Bruce Weinstein 908-821-1019

JUL 26 NJ, POINT PLEASANT BEACH, New Jersey Baseball Card and Comic Book Show, Ocean Fire Company #1, Arnold Ave off Rt 35. T:28 F:$40 10am-4pm, Dave Sumeriski 908-892-5675

AUG 2 NJ, PRINCETON, $500 Give-Away Sportscard & Comic Book Show, Ramada Inn, Rt 1 and Ridge Rd. T:40 F:$50 A:$2 10am-4pm, Bruce Weinstein 908-821-1019

AUG 2 NJ, SOUTH WALL, South Wall Baseball Card and Comic Book Show, South Wall Fire Company, Atlantic Ave. T:20 F:$40 10am-4pm, Dave Sumeriski 908-892-5675

AUG 7 NJ, EAST BRUNSWICK, Sports N Stuff, 10 Alvin Ct. T:32 F:$50 A:$2 10am-4pm, Bruce Weinstein 908-821-1019

AUG 9 NJ, BORDENTOWN, Showplace For Collectors, Rt. 206 N NJTpk exit 7. T:30 F:$35 A:$2 10am-5pm, Ruth Campbell 908-269-9486

AUG 9 NJ, ROBBINSVILLE, Central

SHOWS AND CONVENTIONS

New Jersey Comic Book & Baseball Card Show, Washington Twp. Volunteer Fire Dept. A:$2 9:30am-3:30pm, EMCEE Conventions 609-448-7585

AUG 12 NJ, BRIDGEWATER, Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn, Rt 22 East. T:25 F:$40 A:$1.50 10am-4pm, Bruce Weinstein 908-821-1019

AUG 15 NJ, HIGHTSTOWN/EAST WINDSOR, $250 Giveaway Sportscard & Comic Book Show, 399 Monmouth St. T:50 F:$50-$60 A:$2 10am-4pm, Bruce Weinstein 908-821-1019

AUG 16 NJ, NEPTUNE, New Jersey Baseball Card and Comic Book Show, Hamilton Banquet Hall, Jumping Brook Rd. T:28 F:$35 10am-4pm, Dave Sumeriski 908-892-5675

NEW MEXICO

AUG 14-16 NM, ALBUQUERQUE, Bubonicon 24, Ramada Inn East, 25 Hotel Circle NE. New Mexico Science Fiction Conferene 505-266-8905

NEW YORK

JUL 11 NY, BRONX, Big Hit, Holy Rosary Church, Fr. Winters Hall, Gunhill Rd & Eastchester Rds. T:33 F:$50,2@$90 A:$1.50 10am-5pm, Ray Unger 212-231-2102

JUL 11 NY, BROOKLYN, Brooklyn Comic and Card Show, American Legion 345, 78th St. T:25 F:$40 A:$1 12pm-6pm, Mike 718-266-4011

JUL 12 NY, FLUSHING, All-Star Promotions Monthly Comic & Collectible Show, Flushing Jewish Center, 43-00 1761st St & Northern Blvd. T:80 F:$45 9am-5pm, Matthew Deroma 718-463-6540

JUL 18 NY, LIBERTY, Sports Card and Comic Extravaganza, Liberty Central High School. T:100 F:$20 A:$1(under5free) 11am-4pm, Michael Chesney 914-482-3854

JUL 26 NY, FARMINGTON, Comic Book & Baseball Card and Toy Show, Masonic Temple 197 Hempstead Tpk. A:free 10am-4pm, Ray or Pat 516-669-4332

JUL 26 NY, OZONE PARK, Baseball Cards and Comic Books and Auction, A. Gordon Webster American Legion Hall, 107-10 Rockaway Blvd. T:35 F:$35 A:$1 10am-4pm, Joseph Caruana 718-845-7240

JUL 30 NY, BUFFALO, Comics and Cards, Polish Falcon's Club, 445 Columbia Ave. 6pm-10pm, Frank Caparaso 716-681-3422

AUG 1 NY, BAYSIDE, Sports Card & Comic Show, Adria Motor Inn, 220-33 Northern Blvd. T:30 F:$40-$50 A:free 10am-4pm, Donald Demsic 718-460-9758

NORTH CAROLINA

JUL 12 NC, WILMINGTON, Take 'em Deep Promotions Sportscard and Comics Show, Elks Lodge, 5102 Oleander Dr. T:45 F:$35 A:$1.50 10am-5pm, Walt Breese 919-350-0152

AUG 9 NC, CHARLOTTE, Reality Comic Book Convention, Ramada Airport. F:$50 A:$3 10am-4pm, Reality Conventions 301-791-8159

OHIO

JUL 18 OH, DAYTON, Reality Comic Book Convention, Holiday Inn, I-75 exit 50A. F:$50 A:$3 10am-4pm, Reality Conventions 301-791-8159

JUL 19 OH, COLUMBUS, Reality Comic Book Convention, Sheraton, 2124 S. Hamilton Rd. F:$50 A:$3 10am-4pm, Reality Conventions 301-791-8159

PENNSYLVANIA

JUL 19 PA, DELAWARE WATER GAP, Card & Coin & Comic Book Show, Ramada Inn, exit 53 off Rt 80. T:60, Adam Miller 717-238-5386

JUL 25 PA, HARRISBURG, Reality Comic Book Convention, Best Western. F:$50 A:$3 10am-4pm, Reality Conventions 301-791-8159

JUL 26 PA, YORK, York Comicon X, Holiday Inn, Rte 30. F:$40 A:$3 10am-4pm, Ned or Bill 717-843-6516

AUG 18-16 PA, HARRISBURG, Card & Coin & Comic Book Show, Colonial Park Mall, Rts 191 & 22. T:100, Adam Miller 717-238-5386

AUG 23 PA, HARRISBURG, Reality Comic Book Convention, Ramada Hotel, I-83 exit 18A. F:$50 A:$3 10am-4pm, Reality Conventions 301-791-8159

RHODE ISLAND

JUL 11-12 RI, PORTSMOUTH, Newport Antiques & Collectables Festival, Glen Farm, Rte 138. Show Promotion Inc 1-800-759-7469

TENNESSEE

JUL 3-5 TN, PIGEON FORGE, Baseball Card and Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn, N. Parkway. T:30 F:$75,3@$195 A:$2 9am-6pm(Fri-Sat)10am-5pm(Sun), Stephen or Dawn Osborne 615-932-1634

AUG 1 TN, NASHVILLE, Collector's Expo, Ramada Inn-Opryland, 2401 Music Valley Rd. T:30 F:$40 A:$1 9am-4pm, Dana Pinkard 404-234-8210

AUG 8-9 TN, PIGEON FORGE, Baseball Card and Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn, N. Parkway, T:30 F:$50,3@$120 A:$2 9am-6pm(Sat)10am-5pm(Sun), Stephen or Dawn Osborne 615-932-1634

TEXAS

JUL 18 TX, HOUSTON, Houston Comic Show, Holiday Inn-Katy Freeway (I-10 west) at Silber. T:60 F:$50 A:$3 10am-5pm, Larry Taylor 713-661-0034

JUL 19 TX, AUSTIN, Sports Card & Comic Show, Howard Johnson South, 3401 S. I-35 & Woodward. T:35 F:$39,2@$69 A:free 9:30am-5pm, Ralph or A. Willis 512-431-0193

JUL 25-26 TX, DALLAS, Northtown Mall Card and Comic Show, Northtown Mall, Webb Chapel and Forrest next to 635 (LBJ) expressway. T:42 F:$65,2@$120,EachAddl.$50each 10am-8pm(Sat)12pm-6pm(Sun), Tim Simons 214-243-1272

VIRGINIA

JUL 18-19 VA, VIRGINIA BEACH, Great American XIII, Great American Outlet Mall, 3750 Virginia Beach Blvd. T:75 F:$55,2@$105,3@$150 10am-6pm(Sat)12:30pm-5pm(Sun), Robert Earhart Jr 804-499-9491

AUG 1 VA, ARLINGTON, Reality Comic Book Convention, Howard Johnsons Hotel, 2650 Jefferson Davis Hwy. F:$50 A:$3 10am-4pm, Reality Conventions 301-791-8159

AUG 1 VA, VIRGINIA BEACH, Comic Book & Baseball Card & Record Show, intersection of Independence & Virginia Beach Blvds. F:$65 A:free 10am-9pm, Larry Wetsfer 804-486-5870

WASHINGTON

JUL 12 WA, SEATTLE, Seattle Center Exhibition Hall. T:125 F:$60 A:$3 10:30am-4:30pm, Carl Waluconis & Bill Wormstedt 206-822-5709 or 206-827-5129

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JUL 18-19 WI, MADISON, Madison Collectible Paper Show & Sale, South Towne Mall, 2301 W. Broadway. T:35 F:$ A:free 10am-5:30pm(Sat)11am-5pm(Sun), Hank Luttrell 608-251-6226

WEST VIRGINIA

JUL 12 WV, WHEELING, Ohio Valley Comic Book Convention, Eagles' Hall, I-70 & Exit 218. T:30 F:$35 A:$2(under6free), Jeff Harper 216-493-0408

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Send us:

Name of the show, Date and Hours, City,State & Address, # of tables & Prices, Admission charge, Contact Name and Telephone Number.

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Gareb Shamus, Publisher Pat McCallum, Asst. Editor

Magic WORDS

Wizard Press P. O. Box 648 Nanuet, NY 10954-0648

Howdy! Before we get to this month's mail, let me take care of two things. 1. It's me again, Pat McCallum, doing the mail. The guy who did the mail on issues #1 through 10, Doug Goldstein, is swamped with computer work and doesn't have time to eat, much less do mail. So for the near future, yours truly will be handling the mail. 2. Last issue the head editor, Pat O'Neill, gave me a big hand on a letter from Dan Carney about original artwork. I couldn't answer it, but Pat came through like a champ. Just wanted to say thanks.

Attention Price Guide Editors:

I enjoy reading your magazine. It is very informative and has helped me with my comic collecting. I have one problem with your price guide section. The problem stems from your section dealing with *Spectacular Spider-Man.* This column has a habit of missing issue #139. This issue deals with the introduction of Tombstone, a villain from Joe Robertson's past.

I am sure all the Spider-Man collectors would agree with me that this is a collector's item. Can you please include this issue in the column? Also can you send a status on this issue for my records?

I would like to thank you for listening to my problem. Please keep up the good work you're doing with your magazine.

George Brown
Port Elgin, Canada

Jeez, George's right. *Spidey* #139 was missing from the price guide for a while, and even when we added it, we forgot the info. Sorry, guys. As of this issue it's fixed.

Dear Wizard,

What is going on?!? I only own two issues of Wizard. In February, I picked up issue #7 and then I skipped issue #8 because I hate Bishop and bought issue #9. What's up? You're not listing prices! Issue #7 went on the shelves in February. It listed prices for comics that came out in March and April. On the cover it said March '92 and it even has April '92 comics' prices. I thought that this was great! But then, in issue #9, you only listed up to April prices. Like on Cage, in *Wizard #7* you only listed up to #1. Two price guides later, you didn't even list #2, in fact, you didn't even list any of the May prices. I find it very frustrating and if this continues I will be forced to change to another price guide.

Jacob Zeringue
Bogalusa, LA

Jacob, let me explain how price guides work. We collect data and info and stuff, pass it by retailers to see what they sell it for, get a national average and then put it into the Wizard price guide. We can only do this when a book is already out, and it takes about one to two weeks to sort through it all. So when you buy this copy of *Wizard* #12, it will have a cover month of August, it'll be available July 1st and will have prices up to June 30th. Occasionally, we'll be able to get a more advanced listing, but otherwise that's how it works.

Dear Wizard,

I am writing to your magazine about a large group of individuals who never really get their chance in the sun. We are "Unseen Artists". You can identify us at conventions, we are the ones with the large black portfolios or folders, full of artwork and/or stories that have never been published. Most of the time you will see us looking for editors from the larger companies, hoping that we can be given a chance to become a comic-book artist. But almost every time, the editors avoid us.

I went to the convention in New York in January. At this convention, almost everyone who is somebody in the comics industry was there. As I looked around, I saw many "Unseen Artists" standing on lines where the large companies were, hoping that they could get even the slightest of compliments by someone in that company.

As I stood on these lines, I began to observe what was going on around me. The two larger companies (you have any idea who they are?) spent their time at the convention as if it was their own personal get together, they weren't really paying attention to the fans, readers, or even the "Unseen Artists" who were there to see them.

I saw plenty of good work by the "Unseen Artists" standing in line around me. As the art director of one of the large companies looked at everyone's work on the line, he went through very quickly. He would flip through a few pages of the portfolios and say such things as "You need help with anatomy. Next!" "You need help with perspective. Next!" Then it was my turn. He looked at maybe three pages of my portfolio and asked me if I have ever done this professionally. I said, "No, I've never been given the opportunity" and he responds "That's not my fault. Next!" I found this very discouraging and once again all I can do is pick up my portfolio and walk away.

When this happens, all type of things go through your head, like, " I can't believe I can't get work and they hired some other artist who's less artistic because he's the editor's cousin or the writer's nephew. It's not what you know, it's who you know, etc..."

But this time around, something happened to me as I was leaving. A nine-to-ten-year-old kid had gotten Larry Stroman's and Mark Bagley's autographs in his sketch book and he was watching me put away my portfolio. He asked me if I was an artist, I told him I'm trying to become an artist. He looked at some of my work and said, "You look like an artist to me". He then asked me if I could draw a picture of Spider-Man in his sketchbook and he would give me the three dollars that he had. I drew the picture (but couldn't see taking three dollars). As I drew the Spider-Man character for the kid, he went to get his father. When I was done, the kid was excited and happy. His father thanked me and insisted that I take his offer of $10 for making his son so happy. I couldn't accept the money because the smile I was capable of putting on that young man's face was payment enough for me. I had to wonder if this is how Todd McFarlane feels when he autographs a comic book for a fan.

I've taken this experience and I use it as a motivator. Even though I send plenty of submissions to the large companies , and get turned down every time, I'm going to keep trying. I am hoping that this letter can be published, so I can mention to all those

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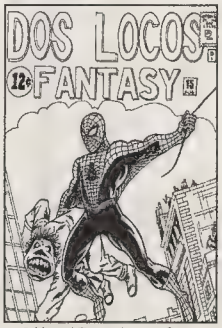

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fans and readers who enjoy comics, and see us "Unseen Artists" at conventions, please look at our work.

As a reader, you can tell us what you look for in an artist and what you prefer reading. You can encourage us to push on, not to give up because we are unseen.

Even Todd McFarlane and Jim Lee were once "Unseen Artists," so maybe the next superstar artist is out there waiting for his chance in the sun. You can help him by just giving him encouragement, because as an "Unseen Artist" we can really use the support of the readers, because if we ever get published, it is the readers we will be trying to please.

Jay Vargas
Rego Park, NY

Editor Pat O'Neill jumping in here. When editors and artists attend conventions and agree to look at artists' portfolios, they are generally swamped with them. It may seem to you that the one- or two-sentence critiques handed out are not meaningful, but it's honestly all the reviewer may have time for, without backing up the line tremendously. In addition, an experienced eye can usually judge whether an artist is ready to go pro or not very quickly. I was at a convention in January, and I spent part of an afternoon hanging out with Walt Simonson and Jon Bogdanove in the portfolio review room. I saw both men give solid, insightful, helpful critiques of a dozen or so portfolios. At the same time, Joe Kubert—a man who now makes a large part of his living teaching comic art—was cheerfully giving his expertise away for free in the same way. My advice to you, Jay? Take whatever criticism you were given at the convention to heart and look into improving in the areas suggested. Then approach some of the smaller publishers—Malibu, Innovation, Now, as examples—and get some professional credits under your belt. Then go back to the Big Two or Three with not just your portfolio, but a resume as well.

Dear Wizard,

Correct me if I'm wrong. In April's Wizard, it says *Peter Parker, the Spectacular Spider-Man* number 26 is worth $46, but in May's *Wizard*, it says it's worth $6! How come a big change? In April's *Wizard* it's not highlighted with a grey line. I think there is a mistake—can you please tell me the correct price? Thank you so much for your time.

Trent Rasmussen
Elizabeth, CO

Can you say Type-O? The actual price is about six bucks. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Dear Wizard,

#1. In the entry for *Ghost Rider* volume 2 #2 you say it is the first appearance of Blackout, but in *Nova* #19 you also said it was the first appearance of Blackout. Which one is right?

#2. What would you think of a Ghost Rider Nintendo game?

#3. How can I make my own action figure? That's all, so keep up the good work!

Paul Wilson
San Antonio, CA

Let me see if I can't help you out. #1. There are two different Blackouts running around the Marvel Universe. The one in *Nova* is the one with a lightning bolt on his head. He can form "Black Light", a gooey, tar like substance to nail people with. The other Blackout, as I'm sure you know, is the albino vampire guy who keeps bugging the crap out of Ghost Rider. #2. I'd buy it. #3. Check out the Wizard special on sale next month that has a big feature on home-made figures.

Dear Magic Words of Wizard,

That's it! I've finally had enough! I've waited since issue #6 for y'all to correct several mistakes and that's all you've done in issue #10..."correct several mistakes". Pleeease! Correct me if I am wrong, but: *Hulk* #238—no price given. *Iron Man* #24—ditto. *Nexus* #9, *Showcase* #77, *Web of Spider-Man* #64 and *X-Factor* #19—ditto,ditto,ditto, and ditto! Also *Demon* #3 - 15 (do these comics exist?)

But you have corrected several others—thanks. (whew!)

Next item: The use of the color bar to indicate an increase or decrease in prices is inconsistent to say the least. Again several recent examples are: *Nomad* #1 (reg) from may to June - increased w/o a color bar. *Iron Man* #55 from April to May - decreased again with no indication. There are more examples, but I am sure you get the point. It has become a struggle to maintain a database of prices with this type of inconsistency. Enough of the ragging on Wizard! Now for the good stuff..ready for this? Here we go...

What a magazine! The pictorials articles and interviews are superb and of great quality! We love it here in San Diego (home of the only National Super-Con).

I read (almost word for word) the rest of Wizard while absorbing as much as I can. Now the problem is that I usually finish dissecting your magazine in a day or two and have nothing more to read. I want more! Reading it over and over and three to four weeks before the next Wizard comes out is not enough for me! I would even pay a couple dollars more for a thicker monthly magazine! Seriously, guys!

Well...I'll close with one forgotten suggestion...Please continue to perforate the pin-ups (just like in #8 and #10). It makes life easier!

Mar Austria, Jr.
San Diego, CA

Wow, after reading your letter the Wizard staff went over issue #12 with a fine-toothed comb and corrected not only the ones you've listed, but a few others as well. Thanks for the tips. As for the colored bars in the price guide, that long, winding road of production has a nasty habit of losing the occasional shading bar. We're correcting that problem. As for the more pages question...Here goes: Remember that monster 200-page *Wizard* #10? What that was all about, was a sneaky way to test our readers. We kept the cover price at $2.95, but we packed that issue with tons of new features as well as updated versions of old, just to see what you guys liked. We got tons of those "So..Whaddya Want?" surveys back telling us what you loved and what you didn't, and we added and subtracted all sorts of stuff to make *Wizard* a better magazine for you. We did that so when the cover price went up (as of issue #11), you got more of what you wanted to see.

Dear Sir or Madam:

I have encountered a problem with your Scavenger Hunt. In the "Contest Rules" section of the "Scavenger Hunt" page, it says that all entries must be postmarked by July 31st and received by August 1. If it is postmarked on the 31st, how can you receive it on the 1st? Also it says that the drawing will be conducted on June 26, 1992. How can this be if the deadline is July 31? I would appreciate it greatly if you could print the correct deadline in Wizard #11. If it is already late to do this, I would appreciate it if you could send me the correct date. Thank you.

Bruno Tapia
North Bellmore, NY

That Scavenger Hunt is pretty screwed up. These are the official fixed rules: 1. All the prizes to be awarded are those listed in the yellow part of page #73 in *Wizard* #10. 2. All entries must be at Wizard H.Q. no later than August 7th, with winners being selected on August 10th. Winners will be announced in the pages of *Wizard* #14. There were last minute changes in the Hunt, that's why the mix-up. And speaking of people pulling off a perfect 147 points! If you haven't tried it yet, give the Scavenger Hunt a try. It's really a lot of fun.

Dear Wizard,

I would like to disagree with those people who wrote in saying that Apocalypse might have created Wolverine. Here are my reasons. First the Weapon-X program was a program designed to create the ultimate killing machine that was entirely under someone's control. These killing machines were originally supposed to be released into the public without any knowledge of their added abilities (i.e. claws, adamantium-laced bones, etc.) and then were to be activated when needed. Second, as clearly pointed out by the professor at the end of the Weapon X saga, there was no one else behind the project as had been implied throughout the

project. For these reasons (and others), I doubt that Apocalypse had anything to do with Wolverine (although if he did it would do wonders for the value of *X-Factor #6*, his first non-cameo appearance).

I have a suggestion for you guys (I know how much you love them). I think that you should have, in addition to the cover artwork contest, a contest for aspiring writers like myself: those people who are not gifted with the ability to draw, but can write one heck of a storyline. Also, maybe you could have a contest where people could send in ideas for a character without actually drawing them. Then you could take the best character creation or two and get a professional artist (you know, such as Liefeld, Lee, Portacio, Byrne, etc.) to draw the character. Anyway, congratulations on such an incredible magazine and may you continue to bring us those awesome covers, interviews and various features forever.

Philip Jason
Sands Point, NY

It just doesn't seem like a Wizard letters page without a Wolverine or Archangel debate, does it? Anyway, your letter makes a lot of sense, but if you read Marvel Comics these days, you'll notice that they don't pay much attention to continuity or the way characters used to act. So is Apocalypse responsible for Logan's skeleton claws? We at Wizard think so, but it's what Marvel thinks that really matters. As for a written version of "Amazing Art," we have discussed the idea with a major comic company, and you should see something by the end of this year.

Dear Wizard,

I am writing to you with reference to a letter published in issue #10 about Gambit's first appearance. Was it *X-Men* #266 or *X-Men* Annual #14? It was in fact *X-Men* Annual #14 as this was on sale four to five weeks prior to *X-Men* #266. As continuity goes, *X-Men* #266 was supposed to be his first appearance, but the gang at Marvel must be screwed up.

Gary Ambits
Merseyside, England

He's right. Gary enclosed some checklists from *Marvel Age* and *Uncanny X-Men* Annual #14 shipped June 19th, whereas *Uncanny X-Men* #266 shipped July 10th, That's about three weeks apart. So does this mean that the annual will skyrocket in price? Hmm, it'll go up a little, I'm sure, but not a whole lot. People are more concerned with a character's introduction and "real" first appearance than an out-of-order chronological boo-boo.

Dear Wizard,

I have just finished reading *Wizard* #10, and I can honestly say this is the best issue to date! The trading card was a fantastic idea, but it makes me wonder if there are any free holograms on the horizon? I hope you guys could conjure up a Deadpool hologram. Anyway, on to some questions:

1. If Marc Silvestri is doing *Cyberforce* for Image Comics, will he be leaving *Wolverine*, like Rob is leaving *X-Force* and Jim leaving *X-Men*? Gee, I hope not!
2. Did you hear of any Image Universe cards coming out?
3. Are there any plans for a second X-Men card series? (Maybe then I'll see a Deadpool hologram.)
4. Are you guys going to do a Deadpool cover, or what!? (I like Deadpool.)
5. How about a hologram cover for Wizard!? How 'bout it? Huh? Huh? (I like holograms.) I know this is a long letter, but you don't print enough letters from Canada, so please print mine, eh?

Ken Cormic
Sudbury, Canada

Ken, you hoser. We do plenty of things with you wacky Canadians. In fact, we spend a lot of time up here drinking beer, eating bacon and watching hockey, now ain't that Canadian of us? As for your questions... 1. Yup! Mr. Silvestri is leaving Marvel for Image. 2. Yes, there are plans for Image trading cards. No specific details yet, but if we catch wind of anything, we'll keep you posted. 3. Considering how well the first X-Men series sold, you could bet Psylocke's underwear that they'll be a Series II . (But who's gonna draw it?) 4. We have Deadpool slated for a cover, but an artist has not been chosen yet! 5. Check out the cover to the *Wizard* Special for the coolest cover you've ever seen. On sale next month sometime.

Dear Wizard,

As I fingered through issue #10 of *Wizard: The Guide to Comics*, an interesting new feature crossed my eyes. The article in question was "The Brat Pack". The caption underneath the title explained how the Wizard would be talking to younger readers, to find out their point of view on the comic book industry. This seemed like a good idea, as I assume most of the people who buy your magazine are that age. However, I found that just what I should have expected, that the Brat Pack were just a bunch of kids, lacking any comics knowledge.

It was interesting to find that Mike and Phil claimed to have collected comic books for eleven years and eight years respectively, yet, they failed to show me that they had any collecting experience. When asked what comics they collected, they all, gave answers that were "90% Marvel, with almost no alternate publishers." How could two people who spent most of their lives reading comics have no exposure to the many fine products of non-Marvel publishers? Well, Adam said he "picked up a couple of different ones," but of course, they weren't Marvels, so "they're all kinda crappy." Mike also would, "pick different titles up every now and then, when I have something left from buying Marvel books." I tried to figure out what made them like Marvel so much, and I think I know the answer. They are too busy buying all the multi-covered, gimmick titles Marvel spews out, to have any money left for another company's book. This lack of exposure to non-Marvel comics is probably the reason for this. Obviously, the Marvel Universe is vastly superior to any other, because it is,"the most realistic comic universe." I can see how the Punisher and Cable are very realistic, I often see people like that wandering the streets. "Reading a DC comic is like reading a Marvel in slow motion," I get to skip all those "crappy" things that DC includes, like plot and characterization. This letter has run a little long, and I know it's very difficult for a Marvel comics collector to read so many words, so I finish it here. I'm going to challenge the "Brat Pack" to try and read something different. Please forward this letter to each of them, so they can properly respond to this. I will personally send them a non-Marvel comic or two, that I consider to be vastly superior to anything that Marvel produces. In response to this, I would like to give them to give me a Marvel that they think is better, if they can. I hope to show them there are good comics that aren't published by Marvel. And just in case you were wondering, I am only a couple of years older than the "pack", so I'm not some older guy trying to rip apart some kid's argument. Until the next time, make mine (anything but) Marvel!

Justin Pollack
Woodbury, NY

Wow, you seem pretty miffed there, Justin! Someone steal your *X-Force* collection or something? As for your anti-Marvel comments, you're as biased as you claim the Brat-Pack to be. Where you call the pack "Marvel Zombies", your comments and insults directed towards Marvel fans are nothing more than strong opinion. So before you go off attacking someone because of what they like, eat some fiber and loosen up a bit! The Brat Pack is designed to find out what's going on in the minds of the comic buyers and Marvel fans take up a big chunk of that market. The first batch of kids for the pack were very big Marvel fans, so you got an insight into what they like to buy and why. Future pack members will include fans of all sorts of books, and the occasional Canadian (just to make Ken Cormick happy). So chill out man, the Pack will touch down to all sorts of different people to get all sorts of different responses.

Dear Wizard,

In my 18 years of comic reading (I'm 30 now), I've never been moved to write a letter to any magazine or comic before. But your superb magazine has got my creative juices flowing and inspiration has struck.

Comics were an inspiration to get my BFA in Graphic Design, but your magazine was the inspiration for me to try my hand at comics. Please keep your "Amazing Artists" and "Art School" sections, as these will

inspire future generations of comic artists. Also, in regard to "Brat Pack", from issue #10, I was disappointed in these young readers' views on Marvel vs. DC. When I was their age, I read nearly an equal amount of Marvel to DC. But as I matured, I read more and more DC, and, in the last five years an increasing number of independents. I grew up with Spider-Man, Batman, and Daredevil. And as I grew, I realized that Batman and many of the other DC titles touched on issues I felt were important. Many DC heroes dealt with their problems as I would have. They were also characters that were fairly mature. Marvel characters were so often more rebellious, anarchistic, childish or plain psychopaths. But their stories were almost always fun and non-stop action—very few quiet moments. Marvel was a big exciting roller coaster—it is great the first few times, but if you ride too often you just get sick. At Marvel, X-Men and Spider-Man were losing their popularity before McFarlane, Lee, and Liefeld stepped aboard. They made these titles hot; not the other way around. If these young readers continue to read and enjoy comics in five years, DC, Valiant, Dark Horse, Continuity, and Image will be the comics they will be reading. Broaden your horizons and enjoy!

Merle Fager
Victoria, KS

Dear Wizard,

I have a copy of *Spectacular Spider-Man* #189 without a hologram. It has a white space in the middle instead. This was the only copy like this in the dealers' shipment. Over the next 2 days I called area comic stores/dealers and found out that no other copies were known to be missing holograms! The general idea I'm getting is that this could be a collectable production flaw that slipped past Marvel's fingers at the printing press. If so, how would this be valued and should it be kept short or long term?

Joe Koch
San Antonio, TX

Your copy of *Spectacular Spidey* is pretty special, though a definitive price would be pretty hard to nail down. A safe estimate would be $10-15. What you might want to do is hit a couple of comic stores and shows and see what dealers are willing to pay for it. As for keeping it in your collection or not, that's up to you.

Ok, that's it for this month, but before I go, two things:

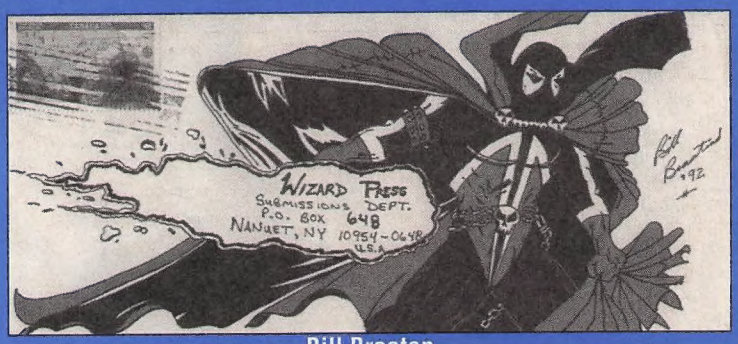
1. What's wrong with you guys? We used to get tons and tons of stuff for the "Fabulous Letter Art," but now, we getting half as much! I know that "Amazing Art" is more fun than drawing on an envelope, but c'mon!

2. Now that I'm in charge of the letters page, I'm changing the "publish my letter bribe" to trading cards with hot chicks on 'em. So, I'll see you (and some hot trading cards) next issue!

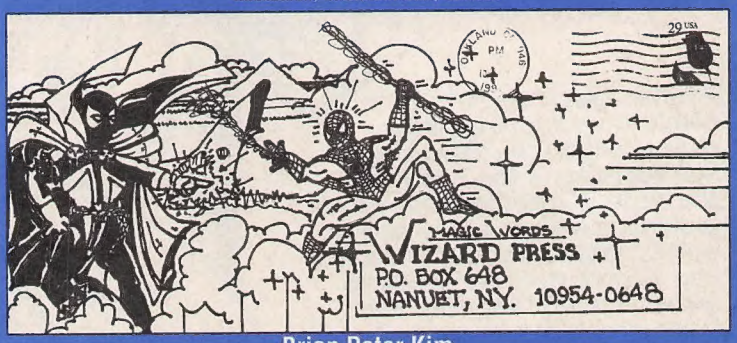
- Pat McCallum

Fabulous LetterArt

Thanks for the terrific letter art. Every month our diehard fans with talent to burn adorn their praise (or complaints), sometimes, we think, just to get a little extra attention. Guess what. It works. Here's four for this month!

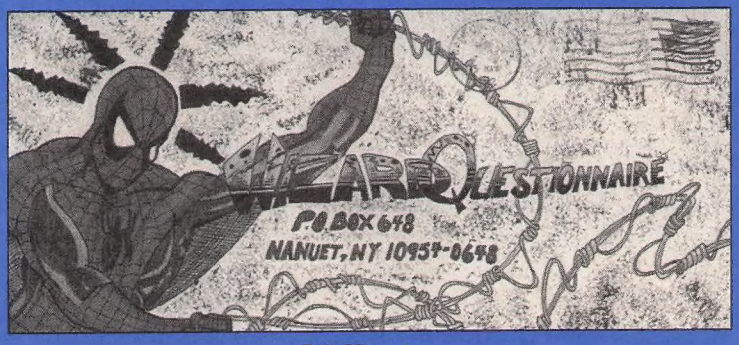


Bill Braaten
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada



Brian Peter Kim
Fremont, CA

Rashida Lewis
Staten Island, NY



Bill Meechan
Dover, OH

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